The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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REVIVIFYING THE SUPREME COURT

AS CHIEF JUSTICE HUGHES, when he was Governor of New York, declared in a public address: "When there is muck to be raked, it must be raked, and the public must know of it, that it may mete out justice. . . . Publicity is a great purifier, because it sets in motion the forces of public opinion, and in this country public opinion controls the courses of the nation."

Great has been the muck-raking during the current controversy concerning President Roosevelt's proposal to reform — or, as his hostile critics allege, to deform, not to say destroy—the Supreme Court. The muck has been heaped together plentifully on both sides of the controversy, and assuredly the public now has the opportunity to know all sides of the question and to make up its collective mind concerning the motives of the President, or those of his opponents, or both.

It is to be hoped that what former Governor Hughes said is true, and that this tremendous flood of publicity will prove to be a great purifier of the atmosphere of the republic, and that public opinion will control the course of the nation in this most vital matter. It is the firm opinion of this particular participant in the discussion that public opinion will finally adopt for the nation the course set for it, or, rather, indicated for its judgment, by the President, as being the most common-sensible, direct and helpful method now possible for getting forward with the nation's business expeditiously, beneficially, and without any really serious disturbance to the constitutional basis of the nation's life.

It seems to us that since the President's second radio address on March 9, there has been a lessening of the opinion that what the situation really required was a drastic constitutional amendment, to release the blockade that the majority of the Supreme Court had established against those

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changes in our economic and social system which the vast majority of the people are demanding and which in a modified form even many of the opponents of the present administration deem to be salutary; and also that the President has been absolved by an increasing number of thoughtful minds of any malignant intention of breaching the foundations of the country's system.

At least, so it seems to this writer, in the course of a journey through many Eastern and Mid-western states, during which not merely the local press but, what was for him far more trustworthy, the private opinions of many responsible citizens were carefully consulted. As one such citizen said: "Any constitutional amendment which would really give power to the Congress sufficient to deal with national economic problems in a national manner could be, and unquestionably would be, held back from adoption for so long in the midst of a constantly increasing social crisis, which exists at the bottom of our present limited business boom, that in the meantime all thorough methods to solve the social and economic problems so as to effect substantial and conservative measures of social justice would be futile—certainly they would prove to be so in an unconstructed Supreme Court—and the menace of radical social change, either toward big business Fascism, or some form of drastic Collectivism, would become a reality."

The fact that it now seems more than likely—in fact, about as certain as matters ever can be in the highly uncertain realm of high politics—that the President's proposal will become law, makes it still more certain that each and every one of the candidates for places on the bench of the Supreme Court who may be proposed by the President will be subjected to the most thorough sort of examination and criticism both in the Senate and in the arena of public opinion. The "liberal" senators who have declared against the President because of their desire for a more fundamental change to be effected in the structure of the Constitution itself, will be highly active in that desirable and most healthful inquisition. So, too, needless to say, will the "conservative" senators, both Democrats and Republicans. Yet it is also certain that there must be, that in fact there are, plenty of thoroughly well qualified lawyers who possess first-hand acquaintance with the stark realities of the clashing interests representing both capital and labor, consumer and distributor, agriculture and industry and finance, and also the newly developed modern social trends, which call for a balance of powers not only among the branches of the government but also among the social forces of the nation, and whose personal character and fitness for the judicial function will bear the closest scrutiny.

That the Supreme Court has been demonstrated as holding firmly the respect and confidence of a vast majority of our citizens, certainly as an institution, is one of the best results of the crisis. That it requires reconstruction, and revivifying, by being composed of members more evenly balanced as between those whose economic and social dogmas are derived from nineteenth-century (laissez-faire) sources and those who derive their dogmas from sources refreshed by more humane conceptions of justice and equity, has been increasingly clear as the great debate has continued. Meanwhile, the dangers to the nation of tampering with the fundamental law, the Constitution, unnecessarily, became steadily more apparent — especially as thoughtful students of the controversy consider and reconsider the drift and meaning of the social philosophy embodied in the minority opinions of the Court itself. Not that we can, or should, of course, substitute minority opinions for majority opinions in deciding what the Constitution means, but surely these minority opinions prove beyond any doubt that the Constitution itself contains all the power needful to give effect to reasonable social and economic legislation when that Constitution is interpreted by minds in tune with the manifest will of the nation, acting to accomplish manifestly necessary measures of humane and justifiable social justice.

Week by Week

The Trend of Events

VIGOROUS statements for and against the President's desire to harness the Supreme Court to the administration wagon have emphasized anew important considerations of policy and principle. It is widely believed that a judiciary over which no one else can exercise real control is the best guarantee Americans can have of liberty. It is no less widely held that what one terms "liberty" remains so contingent upon the solution of basic economic and social problems that unless the President is free to act in a quasi-authoritarian way we shall be in revolutionary difficulties soon. We have held from the beginning that the argument thus briefly sketched is of vital importance; that it should be threshed out carefully and without haste; and that use of political pressure in order to attain Mr. Roosevelt's ends would be a reprehensible avowal that "leadership" ought to take precedence over reflection and the people's will. During the week, however, a new point has been urged—that the perils of inflation are becoming so real that unlimited powers to frame a new set of emergency laws must be sought. Industry has now learned how to circumvent such legislation.

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By bringing the matter to court, it can secure a stay during the time that the protest is being considered. Mr. Roosevelt's plan would certainly stop most of this. The demurrers would know in advance that the case was hopeless. That there is danger of runaway inflation can hardly be questioned, the sole problem being whether the peril will respond to government treatment of the kind the administration is likely to propose. The desirability of some kind of check might well abide. But the outlook is such that proponents of an amendment to the Constitution permitting Congress to overrule the Supreme Court under certain well-defined conditions ought to agree very speedily upon what they want. The Wheeler-Bone amendment as proposed safeguards fundamental rights and eliminates the need for too many additional revisions of the Constitution.

A Strange Doctrine

REPLYING to a question asked by Senator Burke, of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Attorney General Homer S. Cummings made a most remarkable statement. Concerning the President and the Supreme Court, he declared: "It would be a strange appointing power and a strange administration that did not appoint men sympathetic to the administration. I am not disturbed so much about precedents as about the present situation. Future generations should be left to take care of their own affairs; we should take care of the present." That statement came as a result of Senator Burke's wondering whether the next conservative President might not appoint six more judges sure to agree with him. Now it is obvious that if the people of 1789 had concurred with Mr. Cummings, we should have no Constitution at all. They did, oddly enough, believe in the permanent value of general principles and of institutions. Wanting to be sure that no arbitrary powers would deprive the American people of traditional liberties, they went to a lot of trouble and established precedents that took the form of basic law. In that respect they differed not a whit from the great jurists who preceded them. And during the years which followed, many judges were appointed to the Supreme Court; but they were always chosen because of the hope that they would carry on into the future certain desirable ideas and principles. Mr. Cummings's suggestion is that every government should see to it that it gets the kind of court it wants. If he takes the trouble to look about, he will discover this remarkable fact: those who agree with him are not the shining lights of Anglo-Saxon, or more generally of European, juridical history; they are the protagonists of the totalitarian state. These all hold that law is what the authorities decree, and these all adopt measures to see that no dissenting judges are on the bench. Our guess is that Mr. Cummings has not taken the trouble indicated above.

Paul Elmer More

IF THERE was ever a more widely read man than Paul Elmer More, he probably existed among the learned Benedictines of some generations ago. Curiously enough, however, he did not suggest the burrowing scholar at all. Most of the time he seemed a clergyman who preferred a literary pulpit, treated all his or your ideas with an astringent of which he alone possessed the secret, and loved to think he possessed a sense of humor. This last, with its fund of anecdotes, was the only old-fashioned thing about him even in his later years. He was a very good companion provided you could establish a measure of rapport with his mind. This clung to a well-defined set of ideas reached during a life-time of exploration. If he composed an autobiography, it is bound to prove a most fascinating but unnecessary book—unnecessary because all he wrote was a record of the development of his own philosophy. He ran a gamut of practically everything and wound up with a species of Anglo-Catholicism curiously similar to that of his great namesake of the seventeenth century. Few men have so cordially loved all Catholic intellects and saints, and few have so bitterly repudiated the verity of papal authority. His dislike for this went so far that he could never quite bring himself to maintain wholly friendly relations with those who believed in that authority. One trusted and hoped this antipathy would eventually pass away, but it never did. As a result there are lacunae in More's work which a Catholic reader can discern better than anybody else. One must merely avoid letting those bald places interfere with one's vision of More as a whole. He has a great deal to say to the present, and it is hard to think that any part of the future can afford to neglect him.

MORE'S position in the "humanist" movement was a rather strange one. He allowed Professor Babbitt to have the center of the stage—though in many things he disagreed violently with Babbitt's conclusions—just because the Harvard man was a great fighter and systematizer. The point was that such a book as "Rousseau and Romanticism" preached a doctrine of measure, of asceticism, which fitted in perfectly with More's detestation of what he called "the demon of the absolute." For the sake of this boon, the Princeton man could overlook what to him were highly important "errors," for example Babbitt's attitude toward Wordsworth. More was never very good at working out a set of general principles.

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His best statements always resulted from consideration of some individual thinker or artist; and even his version of Platonism does not differ from this rule. Accordingly he is an exceedingly valuable critic, provided one knowns how to read him and is not swept pell-mell into the tow of his opinions. That no doubt holds for "humanism" as a whole. It is a very helpful, highly corrective series of investigations. The chaotic world which the nineteenth century bequeathed to Americans was badly in need of such an overhauling. That world can never look quite the same to us again as it did before More began to write; and it is good it should be so.

We Are Not without Hope

ONE TEST of the vigor of any institution is surely its ability to produce constructive critics—men and women who, though formed within its mold and dedicated to its purposes, are yet able to view its possible or actual dangers objectively and vigilantly, to sound warnings and propose remedies. Gaged by this test, democratic education, we think, passes with flying colors. To select but two of a score of eminent names, Dr. Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of Chicago University, and Dr. James Bryant Conant, president of Harvard University, are products of the system who, by their very ability to criticize it with point and force, prove its quality and its potential in other directions. Dr. Hutchins's fine book, "The Higher Learning in America," must be read in its entirety by anyone wishing to benefit by its stimulating contribution to this subject. Dr. Conant's recent speech at the Jewish Theological Seminary can be appreciated more briefly. It was devoted mainly to a warning against "leveling down," that dread disease of democracy which manifests itself socially and politically no less than educationally. Dr. Conant rightly pointed out the need of an *optimum* standard, both in the quality of democracy's leaders and in the substance of what they are taught in the processes of formal education. He has a special professional knowledge of how the ignorant "leveling" spirit operates—for instance, in decrying research for its own sake, in grudging adequate salaries to teachers, and so on. Far, very far, be it from us to deny any of this. But we would point out that the saga of democratic education is not sung merely by the enumeration of those things of which it must beware. There are other tendencies in evidence besides that of "leveling down"; there is an almost as determined, though of course less widely evident, tendency toward "leveling up," by means of special schools and picked courses for children with a high minimum IQ. There will, it is to be hoped, ultimately be a leavening of the mass lump of democratic education which will lead to the acceptance of the intellectual "aristocrat" with full recognition of the indispensable part he has always played.

Spring Flowers

PRING is being anticipated this month in various American cities by magnificent indoor flower shows. Hundreds of thousands of city folk have during the past few years discovered the really incredible beauty of these displays, and the shows have unexpectedly become public hits. Flowers and gardens can mean many different things to a country. In aboriginal Mexico flower growing and using was the most pleasing culture trait which Europeans found. It is said, however, that there was a truly barbaric quality to the Indians' appreciation; the magnificence of color and luxurious profusion contributing the most definite, and a quite natural delight. The most sophisticated appreciation of flowers and gardens is now surely in Japan. There, flower arrangement is, like poetry and sculpture, one of the fine arts, and great professors give interminable courses teaching the principles. The precise and beautiful gardens are as metaphysical as they are natural. The poor and the rich alike know and love the art and philosophy of gardens and flowers. The Japanese are terrifically civilized. Gardening and horticulture here are still much more suspect. Affectation, snobbery and conspicuous waste still taint too many fragrant roses. But, even at that, real American culture is undoubtedly beginning to be enriched by a more pure knowledge and love of these things. Aside from the increasing beauty of public gardens and parks and forests, there is progress. Among private hobbies, gardening is clearly one of the most salutary the rich have undertaken, and it is not exclusive to them. In these flower shows there is nothing possessive about the hobbies. Working in the Grand Central Palace is definitely the closest that many rich ladies ever get to the people. There is an admirable unity among all the thousands of visitors; a culture trait is growing, increasingly possessed by the whole public.

Concerning Spain

SO MANY letters have been received expressive of one or another point of view on the Spanish struggle that the editors are hard pressed to determine how even a portion of this interesting comment can be published. We shall endeavor to make a representative selection, and meanwhile may be pardoned for attempting to restate our point of view. Dictatorship, whether of the Right or Left, clearly involves a peril to freedom of the individual and the Church. Sympathy with all who confront that fact in Spain seems to us the imperative demand.

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NO CHEERS FOR CIVIL SERVICE

By EVELYN MILLER CROWELL

Proposed revision of the Civil Service is confidently expected to remedy ills which are of rather long standing and to prepare the way for constructive improvement. The author of the following paper adopts a negative view, based on her personal experiences in Washington. She finds that inefficiency and procrastination are characteristics. That there are other views goes without saying. Occasion to present them will not be lacking. The difference between entrance and service requirements are here considered.—The Editors.

AT THE present writing there are eighteen civil service bills pending before the Senate Civil Service Committee and thirty-seven pending before the House Civil Service Committee. Fifty-three years after the passage of the Federal Civil Service Act, civil service is still, or again, one of the livest issues in Washington. Everyone agrees that civil service is going to be extended to all federal employees at this session of the Congress. The only question is how this shall be done. Most people agree glibly that it should be done. But after three and a half years in the government service, from which I resigned January 1, I find myself decidedly lacking in enthusiasm for civil service, as it is now constituted or as it is likely to be administered if any of the pending bills which I have read are passed.

On the strength of first-hand observation I should like to point out a few flaws in the civil service system which should certainly be taken into consideration by its ardent but not too well informed advocates. I have become thoroughly exasperated with the casual reply to any criticism of civil service—"Oh, civil service may not be perfect, but it is certainly better than the spoils system. If it has flaws, it can be improved." In the first place, as I have seen it function, I am not at all convinced that civil service is better than the so-called spoils system. And, in the second place, if any improving is going to be done, now is the time to do it—the method of improvement should be written into the bills, not left to chance.

The present approach to the civil service problem seems to me just as far off the target as it has always been. The very essence of the difficulty is that the emphasis is placed on the wrong spot. Everyone is concentrating on the appointment angle—fair and equal means of getting all applicants considered for civil service jobs and, as usual, slurring over or completely ignoring what is to happen after the examinations are passed and the appointments made.

My contention is that it doesn't make a great deal of difference about how fairly a candidate is chosen if he doesn't do a good job after he is appointed. In other words, if you are going to have a merit system that is worth talking about you ought to have a merit system that is maintained in the matter of performance as well as of appointment. It does not seem too much to ask that the security of a long-term government job should be dependent upon the maintenance of a high degree of efficiency. That, of course, has always been the theory. The trouble is that the matter of enforcement, as regards the future as well as the past, remains practically untouched. And it will remain untouched and our civil service will remain just what it is—a pretty sorry spectacle—as long as merit in appointment rather than merit in performance remains the major issue.

Anyone who has had any dealings with the older executive departments of the government, which boast of their civil service status, knows what I am talking about. As a taxpayer you may have fumed at the endless delay in getting a question answered by mail. As a government employee, I have picked up a government telephone at four o'clock in the afternoon, with an urgent request before me, and had a civil service office-holder laugh, or snort, at the idea of undertaking any task at that hour. And if it happened to be Friday, the reply was likely to be that there was no use starting on a job Saturday morning and that Monday was always a busy day, so I might expect my information Tuesday or Wednesday.

In such a situation, since I belonged to one of those thrown-together emergency organizations, I would go out and work Friday evening and all day Saturday and Sunday, if necessary, and get the information myself. In justice to the employees of the maligned emergency organizations, especially the officials, this is the way most of them worked. There was a job to be done, and done quickly, and they did it, regardless of hours or days. They were not civil servants—in our American sense—and they are resigning in droves.

It may be said that I have cited an isolated, or exaggerated, case or that, in itself, it is not important. I can only assure you that it is neither isolated nor exaggerated, and I do not consider it unimportant because it seems to me to typify the laissez-faire spirit of the civil service. Why should they hurry or do extra work? They have thirty-odd years to go, with little danger of being fired for inefficiency because their bosses hold much the same attitude as the lowest clerk.

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It took me four months to get a breakdown on some figures from the Census Bureau, in spite of the fact that I was in the same building with them and called them with appalling regularity. Incidentally, the dear old ladies in that Bureau wear newspapers pinned over their heads to keep the drafts off. In the file section of another department they use special vari-colored carbon sheets because the old ladies who handle them cannot see very well. Needless to say, I have nothing but sympathy for the old ladies. But they ought to be on pensions, not cluttering up the government offices and driving everyone mad who wants anything in a hurry.

One of the major charges against the spoils system is that it is administered by politicians. Well, if you want to see real politics, and dirty politics, you should spend some time among civil service employees and their civil service bosses. One of the best secretaries I ever knew, with years of civil service experience, was jockeyed out of her job and grade and back into a typing pool because her superior wanted a secretary of his own choosing. That was in one of the oldest and most respected departments of the government, and it is not unusual. Remember that in civil service as it is now constituted, recommendation for advancement or transfer can come only from the immediate superior. And that means that if your immediate superior does not happen to like you, and human nature and emotional reactions do not change because they come under civil service, you may stay where you are until you rot, or until your immediate superior moves up or dies, or unless you are demoted and start again with someone else. That is an angle on which civil service reformers might well concentrate.

Ironically enough, every one of the departments of the government which are, theoretically, completely under civil service have certain "exempt" jobs. These exemptions cover the jobs of secretaries to the Cabinet members. It seems to me a very wise arrangement—naturally a man wants a secretary with whom he is familiar, and on whom he can depend for loyalty and endless hours of overtime when he is moving into a new and difficult position. But I cannot resist smiling when I hear, or read the statements of, certain Cabinet members who go into tirades about civil service for all government employees when I know that the people upon whom they lean most heavily are ones that they brought with them and who have had no traffic with the Civil Service Commission.

And since I have taken the liberty of criticizing the maintenance of a merit system in the matter of performance, by way of constructive advice I would suggest a more facile means of firing inefficient civil servants and of advancing worthy ones. Certainly the cumbersome machinery of the present time is not working satisfactorily.

And now to come to what I consider the secondary phase of the civil service problem, but which everyone else seems to consider of primary importance—the matter of appointments—in the cause of common sense let someone undertake a campaign to have those silly civil service examination papers revised. As now handed out, they contain every possible question except those which you just possibly might need to know in case you got the job. One of the best editorial assistants I ever had took a civil service examination for an editorial clerk's job—and failed. Incidentally, she held both B.A. and M.A. degrees, neither of which was of the slightest importance in her work, but without one of which she would not have been eligible to take that eight-hour examination for a job which carried a top salary of $2,300 a year. Another girl I know, who had done such an outstanding job in an emergency organization that she was invited by the head of one of the "regular" departments of the government to join his staff, could not even be considered when it was found that she had no college degree. As far as I have been able to observe, the qualifications for the examinations and the examinations themselves are calculated to fill the government offices with college graduates equipped with photographic memories which serve to retain a mass of extraneous information just long enough for them to get from a Washington coaching school to the place where the civil service examination is held.

One of the most ridiculous things in the whole civil service examination category, if we are going in for equality and fairness, is the advantage given to war veterans. A veteran is given a five-point bonus above his actual grade on his examination. If he is a disabled veteran he gets another five points. If that merely raised him to the top of the list, or near the top, it might, and justly, cause heart-burning and envy on the part of other civil service applicants, but when the ten-point bonus makes it possible for a veteran to pass a civil service examination in which he has actually failed, it becomes a matter of general concern. Consider for a moment the possibility of a veteran, thus graded and appointed, moving into a position which involves the safety or service of other citizens. Of course what usually happens in such a situation is that the veteran gets the job, and if real work has to be done someone else is appointed to do the work and the taxpayers foot the bill. This is all very fine for the veteran, but does not tend to elevate the standard of the merit system in the matter of performance.

These are just a few of the reasons why I am reserving my cheers for the extension of civil service until I have some assurance that methods are being worked out to provide a merit system that guarantees real merit, in performance as well as appointment.

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RELIGION AND SCIENCE[1]

By WILLIAM M. AGAR

IT IS not possible for each individual to specialize in scientific matters but each should recognize the dangers inherent in ignorance —dangers to personal faith, and the danger that lack of knowledge will serve to increase the prevalent notion that Catholics are purposely kept in ignorance.

Every Catholic is bound to hear his Church stigmatized as obscurantist, afraid of knowledge, and opposed to scientific investigation. Young people in particular, meeting such objections for the first time, and hearing them from the lips of men whom they have good cause to regard as intelligent, must know where to find the answer to these allegations if they are to retain both their faith and their mental integrity. Even one well instructed in the faith and the history of the Church and convinced of the truth of its claims can thus be led to believe that the whole truth has not been told, and one whose faith is weak will find in this a pretext to abandon it.

On the other hand, the effect of an intelligent reply to a false statement or accusation will penetrate one knows not where, and it will often reach people that cannot be reached by any more direct approach. It is like the disturbance caused by a stone dropped into the water of a lake, which is carried by waves on an ever-expanding front until it reaches the distant shores and penetrates even the embayments hidden from view.

The third danger is that unintelligent answers may be given or that ignorant attacks may be made on science and scientists. That this has been an ever-present cause of dissension will be made clear in the discussion of conflicts that follows.

Fortunately it is not necessary to know a great deal in order to avoid the pitfalls of ignorance. Acquaintance with a few fundamentals and with the general history of past conflicts should suffice. It is necessary to know what science deals with and what it does not deal with; the difference between fact and theory in science; how far natural knowledge can lead toward the acceptance of God; and what is the Church's attitude toward science.

The first two are relatively easy to keep apart. Science deals essentially with what can be seen, felt, weighed, measured, or otherwise apprehended through the senses with or without the use of instruments of precision. It observes and experiments with material things and the forces that control them and draws conclusions concerning how things happen and the immediate causes of these happenings.

Science does not deal with ultimate origins or causes, but the increase in knowledge resulting from the application of the method of science to all sorts of problems has greatly increased the number of tools with which the philosopher may work in his search for explanations. It remains true, however, in spite of reiteration on the part of certain scientists that the scientific methodology is the only one capable of revealing the truth, that science is a very specific sort of approach to knowledge and only one of the many aspects of experience which the philosopher must synthesize. Science does not deal with first principles, values, or morality; it cannot determine the possibility of miracles or analyze the attributes of God. Knowledge of these things is gained in other ways.

The second distinction, that between fact and theory, is much more difficult to draw and can best be approached by means of a concrete example. Suppose that a mining geologist is sent to search for ore in a partially developed mine. He penetrates every available opening, notes and maps in detail each bit of vein and wall rock, any change in each, however minute, together with their trend; all slips, cracks, planes of cleavage or any other structural features that can be seen. Armed with these facts of observation and with the results of careful surface mapping he is ready to interpret what he has observed in terms of where new ore may be found. Theoretical knowledge, experience, ability to think correctly, and the bias infused by his particular training become important now. The geologist is theorizing, interpreting and predicting. Assuming the development is directed along lines that uncover the desired mineral, the interpretations upon which the predictions were based, with some minor corrections, become facts which can be used as the basis for further interpretations. It is true that equally well trained observers may see and record the same thing differently but the object, or fact, is there nevertheless, and has been apprehended clearly enough to be the basis of prediction.

Thus science advances step by step and adds to our factual knowledge of the material universe, but when it studies the ultimate particles of modern physics, or when it reaches out toward the boundaries of space, the so-called facts are merely interpretations of instrumental records and themselves contain a highly subjective element. The

[1] This is the second instalment of an article begun in last week's issue.

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nearer science approaches to origins and ultimate meanings the less self-sufficient its empirical methods become.

The third requisite of knowledge listed above, namely, how far natural knowledge can lead toward the acceptance of God, is perhaps the most important of all. Many an argument is rendered futile because the opponents are talking about different things. One may be discussing the attributes of God or the historical authenticity of miracles while the other questions or denies the existence of a Deity. Science, the knowledge of material things, leads most minds to the point where they will admit the necessity of a First Cause, a Creator. There is therefore an intellectual approach to faith and philosophers can deduce certain of the characteristics of the Omnipotent Being without recourse to Revelation.

Make certain first that there is agreement on this point but remember that this does not lead necessarily to the Christian God. Remember that the proofs of the Christian viewpoint are coercive but not impelling. The Christian's knowledge of God is based upon evidence more compelling to him than the evidence of science, it is an extension of natural knowledge, but he must prove this.

A few suggestions along this line must suffice here. With God's existence granted, one can discuss the expectability of a revelation, the historical authenticity of Christ's life and the early Church, the reasonableness of the Christian interpretation of history, and, finally, one can appeal to religious experience which is an application of the scientific test of observation.

Never make light of natural knowledge but insist on the provable existence of supernatural knowledge. Man's soul, fed by Christ and illumined by the Holy Ghost, is capable of a certainty in knowledge that has no counterpart in the world of natural science. It is not necessary to see, or touch, or measure a thing in order to know it.

It is also necessary to beware of a "creedless religion" which some contemporary scientists, admitting the existence of a Creator and seeing the spiritual needs of man, propose as the religion of the future. It is an example of how far astray an intelligent man can go in his thinking along lines in which he is not trained. Creedless religion is similar to the old science, the natural philosophy of the Middle Ages, lacking data and based on preconceptions and subjective judgments. It is just about as intelligent and just about as enduring. Surely no one who knows anything of Christianity can be misled into believing that it can long exist as a positive force if it degenerates into a system of pious wishes and benevolent feelings. Knowledge is as basic to religion as it is to science; and knowledge means beliefs, creeds, something to cling to and argue from.

Finally, what is the Church's attitude toward science? Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, wrote in the fourth century A.D.:

> The Gospels do not tell us that Our Lord said, "I will send you the Holy Ghost to teach you the sun and the moon." We should endeavor to become Christians and not astronomers.

In this and in many other passages he warned churchmen against disputing over matters of natural science on the basis of their own interpretation of the Scriptures, telling them plainly that when they say things which the contemporary scientists can prove are wrong, they weaken the whole case for Christianity.

Canon Henry de Dorlodot, chairman of the department of geology at Louvain, in "Darwinism and Catholic Thought" (1922) wrote:

> In those matters that form the proper object of the physical and natural sciences God taught nothing to man by the intermediary of the Sacred Authors, since such instruction could not be of any use for their eternal salvation.

Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical, "Providentissimus Deus," laid down rules for those who seek to harmonize Holy Writ and the data of science and wrote in part:

> It should be borne in mind first that the sacred writers, or more truly the Holy Spirit Who spoke through them, did not wish to teach men those things [namely, the innermost constitution of visible things] which would be in no way profitable to salvation.

Dorlodot says again that this makes it our duty no longer to violate this principle.

> We must reject a priori any interpretation which makes a text of Holy Writ a Divine instruction upon a subject belonging to the physical or natural sciences.

Charles L. Souvay, professor of Sacred Scripture and president of Kenrick Theological Seminary, writes in the preface to O'Brien's "Evolution and Religion":

> To say that the two [religion and science] overlap is to disparage the wisdom of God, Who does nothing useless. . . . Pretending that there must be an agreement between the dicta of the Bible about natural phenomena and the assertions of science is but another form of the same lamentable mistake.

The Vatican Council states:

> Faith and reason are of mutual help to each other; by reason, well applied, the foundations of faith are established, and, in the light of faith, the science of divinity is built up.

These quotations should make two things clear. First, there is no conflict, in the Church's mind, between science and revealed religion. Second, the Christian who attempts to refute science by quotations from the Scriptures is doing a serious wrong to Christianity.

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AFTER THE GIBSON GIRL

By JAMES W. LANE

IN MATTERS artistic the nineteenth century in America was like an old collector of Greek and Roman antiquities: his room was so full of their beautiful and sterile nobility that it stifled his own vitality. He could not be chatty, he could not be witty, he was only ever thinking of Winckelmann and the refinements of the classical. This might have helped the old man's architecture, as it did, but it was very banal on his painting, for architecture cannot be a running commentary on a nation's life and soul, and painting can be. The old collector found too late that all his sap and vitality had run into the compartment labeled Currier and Ives prints and that there was none left for his painting.

His sands had run out, and his successor, the twentieth century, found in 1900 that in the United States, but for a few geniuses like Homer, Eakins and Ryder, who believed either in recapturing the every-day life of Americans or else writing a sort of moonlight poetry about wind and waves, painting was hopelessly prim, feminine and cloistered, a little like the fiction of Howells. The Gibson Girl was having her fling, the cynosure of all masculine eyes.

Suddenly all this posturing of gentility stopped. A Roosevelt, the first, was elected. Reform was in the air: women smoked, said they ought to vote; labor began successfully to strike. New York and other cities began to grow self-conscious, feel their muscles. Electric cars—elevated, surface and subway—came in, dooming the picturesque horse. People in the city commenced to be aware of their neighbors' activities, whether these included maintaining homing pigeons on the roofs or going to the circus, the old suburban race tracks, and the prize-ring.

A group of eight painters, most of them born in Pennsylvania, arose to do justice to these vital aspects of life. It was so unusual, in fact, to have anything approaching a train or life on the wharves depicted in American painting that these men were considered excessively brutal in their approach to life, and someone dubbed them the Ash-can School! But today, compared with some of the pigmental maunderings of depraved minds, they might be called the Marshmallow Shop.

The Whitney Museum of American Art, sensing the contemporary importance of these artists, has just put on a very stimulating exhibition of the paintings and drawings of six of the men who formed this group of "The Eight." Three other painters, George Bellows, Glenn Coleman and Guy Pène Du Bois, who, trained under Robert Henri, founder of the group, were rapidly to exhibit with them, are also included in the show. The six "charter members" are John Sloan, George Luks, William Glackens, Everett Shinn, Ernest Lawson and Henri himself, all of whom, with the exception of Henri and Luks, who are dead, are still painting with much vigor. Nevertheless, the Whitney elected to show only the work done from 1900 to 1914 by what it entitles these "New York Realists."

Thus, we can form an excellent idea, each painter being represented by nine or ten canvases, of how "radical" American painting was "in the years before the war." Only to be told that these men first exhibited as independents in 1910 in a 34th Street loft building; that in 1913 they helped to organize the first comprehensive modernistic exhibition in this country, the at the time vituperated Armory Show; and that in 1917 they established the Society of Independent Artists, which was the originator of the juryless exhibition—only to learn these things, without knowing the work of these painters, would be to preconceive the notion that their work must be pretty terrible.

Yet how mild and delightful seem the paintings of these men exhibited at the Whitney Museum. Time hallows many things. These paintings, that include Bellows's "A Stag at Sharkey's" from the Cleveland Museum, Henri's splendid landscapes—"New York Street in Winter" and "Evening, North River, 1902"—where he shone far more brightly than he did in portraiture, Luks's old cabman in front of the Plaza, and Everett Shinn's refinedly painted Degas-like pastels of theatre boxes, footlight artists, and first balcony fans, still have abundant vitality. That is their great importance. These artists are now our old masters in painting the contemporary scene. They are adepts in the slice-of-life treatment. They preached the doctrine of "going American" some time before other artists and thinkers did. "Huckleberry Finn" may have been already published; but "The Spoon River Anthology" had not, and the Gibson Girl philosophy of graceful *fainéantise* was lingering on in many sheltered nooks of the United States. Against this, Robert Henri taught his disciples and pupils that "it isn't the subject that counts but what you feel about it." These painters sought to be true to humanity, to catch types. Without being grim reformers, they none the less had humanitarian interests. They read Dostoievski and Walt Whitman.

To catch character on the wing was a dictum that these New York Realists found quite easy to

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apply, since at least half of them had been trained as illustrators on Philadelphia papers and Henri furthermore taught them to put their paint directly on the canvas without any preliminary charcoal drawing, to draw with the brush, as it is called. These men therefore were on their toes; they did not fear the reportorial slant. Did Daumier? Did Degas? Both Degas and Daumier, and, to a lesser extent, Manet and Monet, influenced some of these able painters in their approach to American themes.

Daumier, for instance, can be seen standing behind the simplified mordant scenes of restaurant or street life painted by Du Bois in their silhouetting of a black figure against grey backgrounds, the whole a study in harmonies of low-toned, neutral colors. Degas's theatre scenes of course appealed to Shinn. Luks painted too quickly and too darkly, but once in a while the murk lifts (or his paint cracks less than usual) and we find him down on the West Side docks portraying a subject of unusual vitality. Or, better still, it is John Sloan doing a scene of Jefferson Market Jail, worthy, in its brooding atmosphere of a heavy building overhanging a group of gracefully dancing children, of the way Charles Burchfield can make buildings "speak." Or there is Ernest Lawson, whose admiration for Monet's pointillism is so high that he created an even more harmonious and singing style of his own—what James Huneker termed a style of "crushed jewels," at its worst, somewhat thick and impacted, but at its best (as in some of the Harlem River bridges) as glittering as cloisonné.

Yet, though a great foreign master might be pointed to here or there in these painters, credit them—and most of them, save Bellows, have been to Europe—with remaining strangely free from European entanglements. At a time when American painters all too often were forced to go abroad for training—since outside of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where The Eight were instructed, few museums had courses in drawing—these men showed that, as far as subject-matter went, we had carloads of it right under our eyes. The commuter's feel as he comes off the elevated on a winter's evening into bustling, jostling throngs with the teeming traffic of surface cars and newspaper trucks carrying the late editions uptown; the feel of wind on a tenement roof as three girls dry their hair there—to these reactions painters had not been sensitive before.

It seems incredible that all these vital feelings which go to make up our total day should have been either smothered or despised by our nineteenth century. Certainly, though these painters were called also the Revolutionary Black Gang, what they were really doing was bringing America, through the means of their graceful canvases, to a realization of herself. They were making her snap out of an all too long esthetic coma, where the artist's stock-in-trade—illimitable experience, as Bellows put it—was never drawn upon, because it was never known.

BLASPHEMY

By STANLEY B. JAMES

NEWSPAPER stories and photographs of the excesses committed by the enemies of the Church in Spain have revealed one curious feature. We have read of bonfires made of sacred objects and of mobs dancing round them in orgies of exultant joy. Sometimes the iconoclasts have amused themselves by parading the streets in priestly vestments or in the habits of religious. The caricature of holy rites by hooligans has sent the crowd of spectators into fits of laughter. The comedians seem to have had an easy job. It required apparently no subtility to "bring down the house." The coarser the jest, the more extravagant the buffoonery, the more appreciated were their efforts. Clowning of this kind is a not uncommon thing under certain conditions. At all times and in all countries the popular mind has shown a disposition to treat in this way the things it has once reverenced. We have seen it in Russia. At the time of the Reformation it was a frequent phenomenon; we even read of mobs in the north of England playing football with the head of a decapitated martyr. And even before there was open schism a tendency to ridicule sacred things in the "religious" plays and other popular sports became so flagrant that ecclesiastical authority was obliged to step in and forbid the performances. Familiarity had bred contempt and contempt had passed into irreverence, an irreverence which reacted violently against the conventional piety which previously had held it in check.

We might pause here to observe that such displays reveal the superficiality which often characterizes an external devotion. It is like the "good behavior" of schoolboys under the master's eye. It is even more like the decorum of society during the period between a genuine belief in the commandments and an openly avowed revolt against them. Let the more daring spirits break the spell of authority and at once it becomes evident that the conformity of the crowd was but a servile

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obedience to custom with but little spiritual reality behind it. The traditional practise of religion as manifested in the observance of customary rites may disguise a widespread scepticism. Recent events have shown that to build our hopes on the maintenance of such traditional habits is to display a facile optimism ignorant of human nature. The evil is one to which those countries are particularly liable where Catholicism has had time to become a national tradition, accepted as a matter of course by all classes, and where criticism has been held in check by public opinion.

But (and this is the point) it is evident from the very violence of the reaction and from the forms that it takes that the fear with which sacred things and persons were regarded has not been entirely exorcized and that it is the very effort to exorcize it which accounts for the excesses in question. An image may be burned not because the belief associated with it has become incredible but because it still exercises a power over the mind which is resented. When the Pope is burned in effigy or his representatives are burned actually, the act is similar to that of savages who imagine that by setting light to an image of their enemy his power over them will be destroyed. The insult is based on a belief in the reality of that power. The best illustration of this mental attitude is to be found in those Anti-God Leagues composed of Russians who treat God (in Whose existence they are supposed to disbelieve) as though He were some powerful capitalist whose threats they are ready to defy. The cartoons in which He is ridiculed have the same character as those which caricature living statesmen. One would gather from them not that He is non-existent, but that His authority is discredited: He is a dethroned monarch Who must be prevented from attempting to regain His lost Kingdom. "The devils believe and tremble," we are told, and the same may be said of those would-be sceptics whose violent efforts to rid themselves of a haunting suspicion concerning Deity only serve to betray its continued power over their minds.

And what is true of these cruder exhibitions of anti-clericalism is true of the same movement when it manifests itself in the more refined medium of literature. In "After Strange Gods" Mr. T. S. Eliot says:

> No one can possibly blaspheme in any sense except that in which a parrot may be said to curse, unless he profoundly believes in that which he profanes; and when anyone who is not a believer is shocked by blasphemy he is shocked merely by a breach of good form; and it is a nice question whether being in a state of intellectual error, he is or is not committing a sin in being shocked for the wrong reasons. It is certainly my opinion that first-rate blasphemy is one of the rarest things in literature, for it requires both literary genius and profound faith, joined in a mind in a peculiar and unusual state of spiritual sickness. I repeat that I am not defending blasphemy; I am reproaching a world in which blasphemy is impossible. . . . Blasphemy is a sign of faith. Imagine Mr. Shaw blaspheming! He could not.

There is indeed, in English-speaking countries, a remarkable absence of those anti-clerical blasphemies which are to be met with in countries traditionally Catholic. Here and there some belated secularist or professional atheist may shout profanities from his soap-box or offer for sale sheets vilely caricaturing the mysteries of the Faith, but that kind of thing is a survival from the nineteenth century when people took their religion seriously; it is not a native product of the twentieth century. Nor is the reason merely that we have a more refined taste than our forebears. Some indeed may be inclined to see in the absence of blasphemy from the pages of our popular authors a sign that we have learned to respect the realities of religion. It is to be feared however that the reason is to be sought in another direction and one which gives less comfort.

"Imagine Mr. Shaw blaspheming! He could not," says Mr. Eliot. That is true, on the whole, of Mr. Shaw's generation. From the point of view maintained by a very large number of our more prominent writers, to ridicule in a blasphemous fashion the objects of Christian faith would be like whipping a dead horse. Such attacks on a "dead" creed are superfluous. One of the most serious signs of the times, in the countries indicated, is the way in which the authority of dogma is ignored. And by ignored I mean that it is neither openly defied nor valiantly defended. The most astounding and shocking proposals with regard to morals are made without any reference to the fact that they outrage Christian tradition. It is as though that tradition had been forgotten. It has become a point of honor not to drag the "corpse" of religion into the open. Situations occur in plays and novels which simply shout for the Christian solution, yet the authors appear to be totally unconscious that such a solution might be offered. Reviews of books expounding a materialistic philosophy are to be read in what are considered "high-class" journals which scrupulously confine themselves to secondary considerations, as though there would be some breach of good manners in discussing the question of materialism *per se*. Christianity, in these productions, goes by default. It is neither upheld nor attacked, but is assumed to be irrelevant. The absence of a profane handling of sacred subjects may deceive the unwary. But the symptom is perhaps as grave as any that could be found. Unbelief has reached its nadir when it has learned to be polite and to treat the Faith as the learned may treat superstitions that have ceased to be even interesting as examples of ignorance. This ability to shelve with-

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out even insulting dogmas that have agitated mankind for many centuries, this conspiracy of silence concerning questions which the greatest minds of the past reckoned fundamental, this polite evasion of problems on the solution of which everything depends must be taken as indicating a state of mind more hopelessly alienated from the Church than that mentality which can find amusement in the orgies of Russian and Spanish anti-clericalism.

If our reading of the situation is correct a proletariat sufficiently interested in religion to burn relics and statues can be redeemed more easily than one wholly absorbed in questions concerning rates of wages and hours of work. Paradox though it may sound, profanity may be less disturbing than a secularism which has forgotten the existence of religion. It might be even argued that where a mere conventional religiosity due to national tradition has been subjected to ridicule there is the greater hope that religion, in the true sense, will come to its own again. We must not think of those populations which have, in such crude ways, attempted to rid themselves of the fear engendered by a supernatural Church as being finally lost to Christendom. The very nature of their reaction gives hope. And if, with the triumph of the Right, they return to the Faith, it will be, we may be sure, in a sincerer manner that they will hold it than was the case in the past. The revolt against unreality having exhausted itself, there will be some chance for Reality. We cannot say what will be the final outcome of events in Spain and elsewhere, but we can assert that, if Catholicism regains its sway over those in revolt against it, a far deeper spirituality will be manifested than has prevailed hitherto. The evolution which leads from a merely superficial piety through mockery to a sincere devotion is not an unknown phenomenon. That the fires of the iconoclast should, with the sacred objects they consume, also burn up a certain amount of popular superstition would not be an unheard-of thing.

Santa Clara Valley

The hills stand clear today through lucid haze;
I think that we could reach them in an hour,
To see their grace and walk their glowing ways
And feel their sunlight falling in a shower.

Strange that the grass and earth absorb our thought
Which have not mind or sense to apprehend,
But you have noticed when the nerves are wrought
How good it is to watch the low hills bend,

And how they sanction the distempered flow
Of our revenging wit as no one will;
And that the wealthy merchants often go
To build their white-walled houses on a hill.

RICHARD A. FINNEGAN.

CICADA SUMMER

By VINCENT ENGELS

MAY AND June, 1936, in our country were hot, clear and dry, exactly as you would have had them if you had been a cicada struggling seventeen years to the light. As usual, many people complained of these conditions; farmers and fishermen for their own reasons. Certain persons with delicate ears and nerves prayed for rain because it would quiet the cicada. They did not like his voice, and they were afraid of his looks. Nobody in the Department of Agriculture could tell them that such a beast was harmless.

"But this I know, and it's not odd-a,
I do not love thee, vile cicada."

It was his looks, principally, that were against him. He had a body about half the size of your thumb, and four wings to bear it. His six orange-colored legs were rigged with spurs and claws; his black square head looked made for butting; his two red eyes protruded. Seeing him for the first time, you classed him with tarantulas and copperheads.

Farmers will tell you that the nymph, grub or larva of the cicada, hatching in a few weeks from the egg, burrows into the ground, and spends each of his first eight years at a lower level than the year preceding, until he has reached what he considers bottom, where he stays another year and then begins his eight-year climb back to the surface. This is the kind of history which will make most of us say, "If that isn't true, it ought to be." It isn't truth, and what the truth is we need not attempt to set down here, since you can find it in numerous memoirs of the Department of Agriculture which issue, like Broods I to XVII, every seventeen years in a specific locality fixed by ancient accident and ancestral habit. History and fact agree on the important thing, which is that the cicada lives seventeen years underground before he appears to scare the girls, and be photographed by the Division of Insect Pest Survey and Information.

The cicadas have been gone since the end of last June. In the fall we had something to remind us of them in the brown withered twig ends of certain trees. That was the work of the female cicada, slitting the wood and packing her eggs in the hole, making from five to twenty such cuts in a single twig, and always in a straight row. Where she cut too deeply, or where the cuts were too close together, the twig dies. On larger boughs which were able to survive this treatment, and also on the twigs of such tough woods as the holly, you will now see many rows of pear-shaped scars, each still showing the brush of torn wood fiber where the eggs were laid and hatched.

That is the extent of the damage done by the cicadas. Considering that for about five weeks there were millions of them in every stand of trees, it is not much. Almost any bug you can name, unless you are an entomologist, will do more damage, and do it every year, whereas the cicada has not been seen in these parts since 1919, and will not appear again until 1953.

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We shall know more about them then. Previous to last year we knew nothing, being newcomers, comparatively, to the state of Maryland, and suspected nothing, even when we began to find great numbers of unfamiliar grubs in our topsoil. That was toward the end of March. Spring was early, and we were hoeing around the trees. Every stroke of the hoe turned up, or decapitated, one or two big grubs, strange to us in their polished and translucent shells, colored a milky tan or a foul cream. Somebody said these were the pupae of a big night flying beetle, and that was satisfactory to us, so we believed it.

During April we had some rain, but not so much as usual. It was a good spring for bloom, and for early crops, but the farmers were already afraid of a dry summer ahead. Nothing could have been nicer for the cicadas.

The first week of May was very hot. We had troubles enough. One morning somebody came running in to say that the barberry hedge was being eaten alive by a horde of strange big bugs, and we went out to see. Seeing was certainly believing. There were dozens on every bush, and of course we thought that they were there for the one purpose of devouring the bushes to the ground. So we called for nicotine, which is a contact poison, and dosed them heavily with it. When it was apparent that this was taking no effect, we mixed a tankful of arsenate of lead, which is a stomach poison. It would kill a horse, and you, and we were confident that it would kill the cicadas. But we waited thirty minutes and they seemed undisturbed. Meanwhile we could hear a shouting all up and down the street as our neighbors came out of their houses and discovered the cicadas. The mailman came by to say that Mr. Jones, leading gardener of the village, was using Flit. So we tried Flit. A few of the bugs showed symptoms which seemed to indicate distress, but they refused to die. The rest were unmoved and unperturbed. Meanwhile the Flit had burned the foliage.

By the next morning we had learned that the cicadas would do no harm, which was a great consolation. For now there were ten times as many as the day before. Some were just coming out of the ground, still looking like polished milk-and-coffee colored beetles, walking stiffly and unsteadily to the nearest stem. All the flowers were covered with them, and all the bushes, all the apple trees, all the shade trees, all the fence posts, and there they clung until the shells split along the back, and out came the winged cicadas, a light cream color at first, soon changing in the sun to black and red and orange.

Later that day we heard them singing, a whining, wavering song, high among the tree tops. The laundryman, who had been around these parts in 1919, said we would all be deaf or crazy by the first of June. The noise, loud enough then, did grow louder every day through May. Heard solo, when you happened to scare one out of a bush, it was a thrum, clack and burr, but up among the tree tops, where a million bugs were singing together, it had a strident quality, the whine of a plumbing system out of joint. And through the day there were no pauses. During the first week in May, the cicadas grew quiet toward sundown. Then you could forget them until sunrise when they sang again. By the middle of the month, either because there were more of them, or the nights were dryer, they were singing until midnight, and around Decoration Day they sang all night long.

We went through a couple of weeks of midsummer heat about that time. The sun would come up red and smoking in a breathless day, and people who had never seen a sunrise of any kind before were seeing it daily now because the cicadas were keeping them awake. Strong characters slept as well as ever, and except in moments of stress and conflict, did not mind the singing. All others did.

People who came out from the city were especially bothered. Truck drivers and delivery men, thinking they heard fire sirens, pulled off the road to let the engines by, and some were worried enough to stop at the house and ask us about that awful noise. Then there was a furnace man who had blown an ear drum several years ago, and since then has heard many strange puffing and buzzing noises. He has learned how to forget them by whistling to himself while he is at work, and reading mystery stories afterward. The noise of the cicada was something he could not shut out, and when it had gone on for half an hour undiminished, he feared his eyes were much worse.

Now we have summarized all that can be said against the cicadas. In the opposite column, we should list first the fact that birds esteem them highly. They came to our neighborhood in flocks, and fed upon the cicadas, hunting them from the grass to the tree tops. You could see robins grabbing them on the wing, like fly catchers. In this hunt there were also cardinals, thrushes, mockingbirds, wrens, almost everything except humming-birds. Squirrels were active, too. Dogs, cats and some of the giant wasps got their share. We ourselves did not try them, having credited the report of a Dr. Howard, who cooked them in various ways and declared that they "lacked substance." Dr. Howard, probably, like ourselves likes beef.

People who do not insist upon substance probably would like cicadas. Their food value must be very high. Hogs and chickens fatten upon them, and so do fish. Our trout this season were the finest anyone can remember seeing in Maryland. As every fisherman knows, trout raised to adult size in a hatchery, and then released, are not the best trout. After they have been in the stream a few weeks, they are even further off the mark, just as you would be if you were turned loose in an absolutely strange country and left to forage for yourselves. But this year it was another story. When they had fed on cicadas for a month, you would not have known them for stocked trout. They were deep, heavy and highly colored. The cerise band of the Rainbows ran right up over the gill covers and was most brilliant there, as in stream-bred fish; the Browns were strong and hard, and fleshed like salmon.

The best streams are in the hills of Frederick County, and until the first of June there seemed to be as many cicadas in the hills as anywhere else. But then the farmers and CCC boys who had been fishing exclusively with *locus'* reported they were getting scarce and hard to

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find. Down in the valleys they were as numerous as ever until the middle of the month; after that they went rapidly. Early in July they were all dead, everywhere, and their corpses littered the yards and the paths beneath the trees. Birds, mice, cats and squirrels soon took care of that.

Of all those multitudes there remained only one upon the place. I found him in an empty flower pot. He was dry and weightless as a dead leaf. I was able to consider him more dispassionately than would have been possible about Decoration Day. I saw that he was not ugly, but decorative in a native American way, the way of the wild bronzeback turkey. Both seem designed and created by an Indian manitou, and probably are not destined to survive by many centuries the bison or the Indians themselves.

Forest fires, lumbering operations and the expansion of cities help to isolate, restrict and wipe out the seventeen broods of the seventeen-year cicada. Like many other living things, the cicadas cannot survive for long except in very large numbers. In our own locality it is probable that Brood X will come safely through at least a generation or two. The weather was right last spring, and the hatch must have been good. In the ground beneath our trees, at a depth of about two feet, millions of nymphs are now established, each in a clay-lined cell with a hair root running through one corner. There they begin the six stages of a development which in a little more than sixteen years will bring them to the light. If at that time they get six or seven weeks of hot dry windless weather, intolerable to humans, they will think it is no more than they deserve.

This Bleeding Hour

The day is hard of dying here:
It barely lives now, on this hill;—
It barely lives, and like a spear
The cold inquires how long it will.
Of all that is to be, no word;
Only, within a deep-grown fosse;
The wind and rain have almost blurred
The color from a wayside cross.

O Crucified, O Flower of Pain
There at the turning, lonely, stark,
Like winter lightning You make plain
The whole preponderance of the dark,
And by that instant meaning scored
In their young wrath, from depth to height,
Are they who do not own You lord
Yet do their bidding in the night.

Secret of all the secrecies
That wreak victorious in a rose,
Or having bled to pallor, freeze
White crystals in their fiery throes,
The sky is filled with You; the storm
Whistles already in the whin;
A fear is out, and where once, warm,
Your wounds were, now the stars creep in.

BENJAMIN R. C. LOW.

STORIES BY KATE CHOPIN

By JOSEPH J. REILLY

OPTIMISTS like to believe that, in the long run, justice is accomplished in literary history, the unworthy dislodged, the truly great seated among their peers, the neglected called to their place in the sun. Among those last must be numbered that writer of mixed French and Irish stock, Kate Chopin, whose work includes two striking volumes of short stories, "Bayou Folk" (1894) and "A Night in Acadie" (1897). What Hamlin Garland did for the Middle West, Mary Wilkins Freeman for New England, Thomas Nelson Page for the middle South, and Miss Murfree for the Tennessee mountain folk, Mrs. Chopin did for the dwellers along the sluggish marshy streams that meander among the sugar plantations of upstate Louisiana. Leaving New Orleans to Grace King and the pre-war days to G. W. Cable, she sought her material without distinction of class, and her people's knowledge of ante-bellum opulence was largely a tradition.

Mrs. Chopin, like H. C. Bunner, was a student of Maupassant. Her Celtic blood and romantic spirit rejected his icy cynicism and her human sympathy kept her point of view from the rigorous impersonality of his. But her innate talent for story-telling was enriched by studying his virtues and making them her own. Her beginnings are direct, almost laconic: her first sentence starts the reader off like a shot from a pistol; her endings are infallibly "right"; her descriptions whether of things, nature or people, are done with a few sharp strokes; her characterizations are never blurred: her people are not names but three-dimensional and quick with life. And, finally, she mastered the secret of economy in words.

The important thing with Mrs. Chopin as with Maupassant is character rather than situation and, particularly, the response of men—and even more of women—to the passion of love. Maupassant's interest is in the blasé, the sophisticated, when confronted by the ingenuous and unspoiled, while Mrs. Chopin's is in young men and women at the dawn of romantic passion. There are no elopements as in Garland, no roués suddenly moved to a change of heart by pity or innocence as in Harte, no parade of bleak lives as in Mrs. Freeman, or of worn-out elderly ones, however pathetic or gracious, as in Grace King. The elderly are not excluded but youth is almost always at their side, softening their decline with tenderness, profiting by their experience, or implying the onward flow of life and its unquenchable hopes.

The young men and girls of Kate Chopin's tales are unspoiled. They have not toyed with their emotions until they become their victims nor are they afraid of the promptings of their hearts. They are not unduly introspective; they have no need to be, for their instincts, like homing birds, fly straight and true, even though they sometimes make pretense of fluttering away. Hence these girls are capable of simple and supreme loyalty which triumphs over everything but contempt and abuse. For them love is the great, the crucial and transfiguring experience, the door swinging open to whatever earthly paradise there be, glorified by the abiding satisfactions of the heart.

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Mrs. Chopin touches passion with a deft hand. In the case of young women, she is sensitively aware of its revelations, its hesitancies, its fears, while she senses how deeply the young men are troubled by its bitter-sweet torment and bewildered by its divine illogic, and always she treats these things with a certainty and convincingness which owe as much to reverence as to art. Thus 'Polyte, young plantation storekeeper, half in love with Azèlie with the red curved lips, the "dark, wide, innocent, questioning eyes, and black hair plastered smooth back from the forehead and temples," discovers her one night stealing from his supplies. Shocked, he lets her go. "He sat for a long time motionless. Then, overcome by some powerful feeling that was at work within him, he buried his face in his hands and wept, his whole body shaken by the violence of his sobs. . . . After that 'Polyte loved Azèlie desperately. The very action which should have revolted him had seemed, on the contrary, to inflame him with love."

Of course Mrs. Chopin does not confine herself to this sole *motif* nor, when treating it, is she concerned with a single formula. Love dawns and its loyalties find expression in infinite ways; in recounting them she sometimes hints at twists of thought whose subtleties she, like Maupassant, leaves the reader to divine. Thus it is with 'Polyte, instanced above; thus it is with Madame Delile who, on the brink of eloping with the charming M. Sépincourt, learns of her husband's death in battle and at a stroke dismisses Sépincourt from her life and dedicates her youth and beauty to hallowing the memory of the dead.

These subtleties sometimes take another direction as with the middle-aged Mamzelle Fleurette, a sentimental soul strongly attracted to Lacodie, the perky little locksmith who comes to her shop each evening to buy a paper. She checks the feeling rigorously but when he dies and his widow remarries she feels that Lacodie has been forfeited to her and exultingly takes charge of his grave and hangs his picture in her room. Chicot, a half-starved, dull-witted old Negro, is faithful as a dog to an impoverished, worn-out old woman because she bears the adored family name of Boisduré. She dies: his loyalty experiences a curious recoil, abandoning her and centering itself in the large, vague glory of the name she bore. The withered form "was doubtless that of some Boisduré of *les Attakapas;* it was none of his." Tony Bocage, a giant boatman, smitten by Claire Duvigne, a city belle, is hired to take her for a pleasure row and on returning "is stirred by a terrible, an overmastering regret that he had not clasped her in his arms when they were out there alone, and sprung with her into the sea." He resolves not to miss a second chance. So Maupassant might have written, without elaborating on Tony's thoughts or curiously delving into his mind, content with a statement at once laconic and authoritative. But Tony's story in Mrs. Chopin's hands takes another turn into a new—and convincing—subtlety, fashioned to her own pattern, for she was a student of Maupassant's art, not of his psychology. When you finish the tale and learn of Tony's final contentment your memory will recall certain poems of Browning, especially "Evelyn Hope" in which death does not quench but kindle the lovers' faith.

Maternal instinct provides the theme for some of the finest stories. We have it in Mme. Carambeau, long at feud with her son for marrying an American girl, in Mamzelle Aurélie, self-centered and middle-aged, who, on sending back home four children she has mothered for a fortnight, "let her head fall down upon her bended arm and began to cry. Not softly, as women often do. She cried like a man, with sobs that seemed to tear her very soul." Most notably this theme appears in the tale of Athenaïse who, scarcely out of school and married to the widower Cazeau, resents his having married her and hides away from him in a city *pension.* Passion, beauty, and exquisite understanding conspire with unerring characterizations and an ending poignantly tender and exquisitely right to make this story a masterpiece.

Only one of her tales outranks it, a tragedy miniature in proportions, overwhelming in effect, told in a bare 2,000 words, every one significant from the crisp opening sentence to the final closing one which matches O. Henry's "Furnished Room" in the suddenness of its surprise and in the irony and pathos of its devastating revelation. It is called "Désirée's Baby" and is one of the world's great short stories. All Mrs. Chopin's gifts are here in their perfection: directness of approach, sureness of touch, the swift strokes which give the setting and introduce and realize the characters, the amazing economy of words which even she never equaled and Maupassant never surpassed. In a sentence or two she probes the psychology of Désirée and her husband to the quick, after first opening the way by what seem to the unwary scarcely more than casual phrases. The sense of impending tragedy comes early (as it must in so brief a thing) with perfect naturalness and in the turn given a sentence by two words. It is deepened by the picture of Désirée's house where friends visit her and her baby: "The roof came down steep and black like a cowl, reaching out beyond the wide galleries that encircled the yellow stuccoed house. Big, solemn oaks grew close to it, and their thick-leaved, far-reaching branches shadowed it like a pall." As one reads, recollections of other short story masters arise, with whose power and skill in evoking the spirit of tragedy this perfect tale takes its place, Poe, Hawthorne and Thomas Hardy.

From Kate Chopin's two volumes of short stories a modest book containing a dozen tales could be made, which would be an enriching addition to our all-too-few masterpieces. She is incomparably the greatest American short story writer of her sex. Her work deserves wider appreciation. May it soon have proper recognition!

Of Mercy

One day it dropped not as the rain from heaven,
But ripped the body of the Crucified,
More terrible than pain, more fiercely driven,
To run with blood from His pierced-open side.

"Father, forgive them." And the heavens heard,
And lightning signed itself upon the sky,
And earth went dark before a God Who poured
His blood for drink, for those who made Him die.

HENRY RAGO.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—The Easter Benediction of Pope Pius XI is to be rebroadcast over National Broadcasting networks in eastern United States at 5 a.m. Eastern Standard Time. From 1 to 1:30 p.m. E.S.T. the Columbia Broadcasting System will broadcast an Easter Mass from the Church of Nuestra Señora La Regina de Los Angeles de Porciuncula, one of the California missions established by Father Junipero Serra. * * * The site chosen for "Montezuma," the United States seminary for training Mexican aspirants for the priesthood, is five miles from Las Vegas, N. M. The present buildings on this thousand-acre tract, when suitably renovated, can accommodate 500 seminary students. * * * Father Thomas F. Coakley of Pittsburgh told an N.C.J.C. correspondent that the religious education problem had been met in his city by hiring rooms in buildings owned by Catholics directly opposite public schools, for several hours on two days a week. This obviates the legal difficulties involved in holding religion classes in public schools and competitive examinations have shown the instruction to be highly successful. Additional results so far were the validation of 139 marriages, the return of 382 persons to the sacraments and the confirmation of 251 children and adults. In Father Coakley's parish no child has been sent to a charitable institution for fourteen years, and parish relief expenditures have been as high as $3,000 a month. * * * The eleventh church for Negro Catholics in New Orleans is soon to be dedicated; these churches are served by the Josephite Fathers, the Holy Ghost Fathers and the Congregation of the Mission. * * * We have been officially informed that Archbishop Joseph Roncelli, Apostolic Delegate to Istanbul, Turkey, has authorized the Catholics of Turkey to come to the aid of the many German Catholics who have taken refuge there. * * * Some 192 Canadians began work in the world-wide mission fields of the Church under Propaganda Fide during 1936. * * * According to *Les Missions Catholiques* of Lyons, France, India's 3,860,000 Catholics have 176 publications; China's 2,818,000, publications numbering 113 and the Lumen News Service; French Indo-China, 24 publications for 1,441,000 Catholics; and the Dutch East Indies 45 for 445,000 Catholics. Publications in Christian countries devoted to the propagation of the missions number 539 with a total circulation of 104,000,000 copies. * * * An undenominational campaign to raise $80,000 for the completion of two buildings at John Carroll University will be undertaken by organized labor in Cleveland, it was announced March 11.

The Nation.—Majority leader Robinson of the Senate told the press, in relation with the Court changes, that "there is no inconsistency in the President's proposal and in certain amendments to the Constitution that have been proposed." Senator Norris, the dean of Senate liberals and Roosevelt backers, proposed a twofold substitute plan for the President's, calling for both legislative and constitutional remedies for the "intolerable" condition of the judiciary system. * * * Marriner S. Eccles, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, proposed higher income and profit taxes to prevent monetary inflation and "permit the paying down of public debt as private debt expands." The main purpose of his statement was to deny rumors that he favors "tight money" as a guard against inflation and to insist that increased production is the best guard, and that "the supply of money to finance increased production at low rates is ample." * * * Mr. Clarence Addison Dykstra has accepted the position of president of the University of Wisconsin as successor to Glenn Frank. He is one of the country's greatest experts on local government and public administration and is leaving the city managership of Cincinnati, Ohio. * * * A two-day conference on highway safety was held by representatives of nine Eastern states seeking means for reducing the 1936 totals of 38,500 deaths, 1,250,000 injuries and $1,500,000,000 in economic loss caused by auto accidents. The trailer problem also came to the fore, there being 300,000 of them now in use, and another 75,000 expected to be sold this year. The trailer population of the country already equals 2,000,000. * * * Figures on building constructions during 1936 show a 23.9 percent rise in number and a 60.7 percent rise in cost over 1935. Residential construction was up 86.6 percent in number, and 153,237 families were provided for—a rise of 98.8 percent—60 percent of them in one-family dwellings.

The Wide World.—A patrol of Spanish waters was inaugurated by the powers, and several countries moved to bar further grants of aid. Ireland forbade further recruiting of O'Duffy men; and in this country Secretary Hull announced that passports would be refused to all ambulance units other than those organized by the International Red Cross. Nevertheless the great question of the week was whether Italian forces in impressive numbers were acting, under orders from Il Duce, to smash the armies commanded by General Miaja and capture Madrid. The Madrid government declared that at least 30,000 Italians were massed for an offensive aimed at Guadalajara, and cited statements by prisoners to prove that the war had now become international in character. Rightist forces did, as a matter of fact, make considerable progress, but were eventually halted and driven back. Further heavy bombardments continued. (What these bombardments are like can be gathered from a graphic diary by Cilette Ofaire, published in the current *Yale Review.*) * * * President Manuel Quezon of the Philippine Islands, visited the United States in order to promote what he termed a trade agreement fair to his people. At the present time, he asserted, Philippine products are shut out of the United States by high tariffs, while manufactured goods sent into the Islands encounter no such

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barrier. Suggestions that the trade treaty be coupled with complete political independence encountered some criticism in Congress. * * * Developments on the European rearmament front during the week included: the French government moved to nationalize the munitions works of Schneider-Creusot, reimbursing the owners for property thus expropriated; England heard D. Lloyd George declare that far more stress must be laid on assuring food supplies during time of war, and add that the situation now was worse than in 1914; and Germany was a heavy buyer of wheat, apparently with the object of having a surplus in case of trouble. Equally important probably was Il Duce's trip to Libya, so designed that it revealed to the world the series of fortifications and air bases which Italy now controls in the Mediterranean. * * * Dowager Queen Marie of Rumania was seized with a sudden severe illness on March 15. First reports suggested that she might have been poisoned, but official denials followed. Pains were taken by the government to indicate that the Queen's condition was not serious. * * * Ambassador William E. Dodd protested to the German government against attacks on the United States, especially its women, by the German press. Quite fantastic torrents of abuse followed Mayor La Guardia's suggestion that an effigy of Hitler be placed in a New York World's Fair "chamber of horrors." * * * Concessions to the German minority in Czechoslovakia appeared to have strengthened the moderate German party against the Nazi-controlled element. If true, this development would make the outlook for peace less cloudy. Some international observers have been predicting that Hitler would attack Czechoslovakia during May of this year. * * * Bitter fighting between Communist and Fascist groups in Paris started when police and mobile guards protecting a meeting at Clichy failed to keep huge crowds of Leftist sympathizers in check. The casualty list was the longest since the riots of February 6, 1934.

* * * *

Parochial Schools and Public Funds.—Catholics in the state of Ohio have continued their efforts to obtain a measure of state aid for parochial grade and high schools. Some years ago, an initial effort by the bishops met with a rebuff when some Protestants held that the principle of separation between Church and State was in danger. At the present moment, two bills are pending before the legislature. One provides that $2.50 a year shall be allotted annually for every child in school. This measure has been recommended by the senate education committee, though the final vote was 7 to 4. The chances that it will pass are therefore good, but considerable opposition must be expected. The second is the so-called "Fair Play Bill" which would create a fund of $3,500,000 a year for two years, to be known as a Parent-Child Educational Fund. Various prominent Catholics have spoken for the bill, notably the Reverend R. C. Goebel, of Mansfield. Sterner opposition is expected to this measure, although the outlook as we write is not by any means dark. According to the text, the state director of education, having ascertained the number of children in attendance at school, shall administer funds appropriated out of "general revenue" for the purpose of aiding parents who have elected "to fulfil the duty of preparing their children for citizenship in schools not supported by state funds." The parents are to receive for each child "an amount equal to $.10 per day for the pupils in such elementary schools, and $.15 per day for the pupils in such high schools, based on the actual daily attendance in such schools for the preceding year." This would mean $18 a year for the average child. Since there is an estimated total of 300,000 Catholic children in Ohio parish schools, the total sum of $3,500,000 seems very moderate. It is not believed that a suggestion of this character has been advanced previously, and the fate of the measure will be awaited with general interest.

Beleaguered Detroit.—On St. Patrick's Day, Detroit seemed to be getting piecemeal a general sit-down strike. The last good news from there came out March 12, when the United Automobile Workers of America and General Motors signed their final agreement ending the General Motors strike. The Chrysler strike took its place, eight plants being occupied by 6,000 sit-downers. The court ordered them out by 9:30 on March 17, but a day after the deadline there was no indication that they would obey the order. Mr. Homer Martin, leader of the U.A.W.A., declared, "We did not order them to sit down and we will not order them to come out." Governor Murphy had said the court must be obeyed, but had apparently not mobilized the forces which would be necessary to enforce obedience. He arranged to meet a "law and order committee," which he had formed of twenty-three representatives of capital, labor, church, the University of Michigan and the public, and discuss with them ways and means of treating the whole situation. Over thirty businesses in the metropolitan area were shut up with labor troubles of one sort or another, including aluminum, smelting, packing, lumber, ginger ale and cigar factories, food, shoe, drug and other retail stores, a warehouse and long-distance trucking company, and two public welfare offices. The hotel strike which led to violence and the shutting down of Detroit's four biggest hotels on March 16, was settled in conferences with the Governor during the evening when a compromise plan providing arbitration was accepted. The city feared especially strike threats at transportation: taxi, bus, street car, trucking. It was also felt that the milkmen might go out, and already the department stores were taking whatever cautions they could think of in the face of threats by their clerks.

The Church in the Paris Exposition.—The Paris Exposition this summer will have the papal flag flying over one of its great pavilions. This is the first time the Church has entered a great fair in such a manner. The successive halls of the Catholic section—officially, the "Catholic Pontifical Pavilion"—built around and as a part of the sanctuary, will demonstrate how the Church accompanies man from the time of his birth to his death, and even after, for there will be a quiet chapel for the dead, tombstones, inscriptions, and a Calvary. The co-operation of the Church in the Exposition has been

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enthusiastic and without political protests or purposes, which has been rare among the participants, official and private. It is expected that the great expense will be made up by the sale throughout France of booklets of twenty little scenes of the pavilion for 3 francs apiece. First in the Pontifical Pavilion is the Baptistry, which is the beginning of the hall of the children. Here are envisaged the impressions of children before their First Communion: Christmas and its crèche, the month of Mary, the processions of Corpus Christi, and also school and catechism. A special small-scale chapel will depict the First Communion. Then the series showing the relations of the Church with youth begins, with three chief divisions: benevolent activities, schooling, scouting. There is an important division dealing with the selection of a vocation and reflecting the unity of various careers around Christ. A special place to welcome visiting youth and a sort of library and information service are being built. A doorway under a mural, "The Betrothal," will lead to the hall of Christian marriage, featuring a temple of love crowned by a cross. Then comes the Church and old age, the decoration of which is not yet settled, but which will emphasize charitable works and institutions and the story of the Little Sisters of the Poor. The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris is particularly backing the presentation of the Church's construction work through the centuries. The church built at the Exposition will be the 100th constructed in the Paris region since the depression, as a relief measure. Outdoors there will be a separated cloister and a hermitage copied after one in Africa of Father de Foucault, and an open-air theatre. The missions will have a special section in a large room at the base of the tall, metal campanile. Above the main altar the windows will show many French saints, and around it there will be a dozen votive chapels for the different nations throughout the earth.

German Protestantism.—As is well known, German Protestants have been ordered to vote for a new General Synod sometime during April. The purpose of this latest Hitler maneuver was far from clear, since even the date of the election was not fixed in advance. Nevertheless the campaign speeches and documents are extraordinarily interesting. There has been a revival of "German Christian" activity, with outspoken attacks upon both Catholics and non-Aryan Christians. On the other hand, the Confessional Synod continues to assail the Nazi religious program and to insist upon the freedom of the Church. It is clear, however, that the Confessional group is not entirely of one mind. Thus the uncompromising attitude of Pastor Niemoeller is not shared by the South German Lutherans—who favor cooperation with the General Synod under certain conditions—or by such Prussian clergymen as are in agreement with Dr. Koch. Observers believe that during the present campaign Confessional Synod forces will have to draw much closer together if they hope to stem the tide of anti-Christianity that has obviously set in during recent months. The party has evidently declared war on the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, while the army on the other hand has expressed sympathy with organized religion. In this connection the recent address by Field Marshal Von Mackensen is significant. The "war" has affected Lutheran theological schools, some of which have been closed and others of which are exposed to a variety of annoyances. Very great difficulties are faced, of course, by the non-Aryan Christians, more than 30,000 of whom have been organized in the so-called Paulus Bund. One observer calls attention to the fact that since children born to this group are excluded from all opportunities to enter professional or academic life, the descendants of many famous men now fall under a virtual exclusion act. Thus the grandson of Wilhelm Dilthey is not permitted to study in the new Germany. Cooperation between Catholic and Protestant leaders for the defense of common interests continues to some extent, but the efforts on both sides are purely tentative and find no enthusiastic popular support.

Non-Catholic Religious Activities.—The report of the Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Convention adopted in New York last fall on the participation of Lutherans in ecumenical Christian movements has been submitted to the proper representatives in Scandinavia and is now being announced to the Lutheran churches in this country. It states that Lutheranism is world-wide in character because of the distribution of its members and because it is based on the universal teachings of the Bible. It calls for solidarity among the Lutheran churches of the world and in order to preserve their belief in their integrity sets forth a number of carefully defined conditions under which they will cooperate with other Protestant churches in world movements. * * * The March 15 *News Bulletin* of the Boys' Clubs of America, published at 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, reports that in Depew, Troy and Schenectady, N. Y., Birmingham, Ala., Wallingford, Conn., Raleigh, N. C., and Scranton, Pa., boys' clubs are now being initiated or expanded. It says editorially, "The Boys' Club Movement as a whole will not abandon its belief in the validity of the experimental approach and its willingness to demonstrate to a community the value of Boys' Club service by taking whatever building or equipment is at hand and trusting to the increased sense of responsibility it can create to awaken the community to really worth-while service." * * * The "No-Foreign-War" crusade of the Emergency Peace Campaign will be launched, April 6, under Admiral Richard E. Byrd, who will speak over the air, together with Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, at the opening of the two months' campaign which is to reach 2,000 communities. * * * At a luncheon meeting of the University of Illinois Y. M. C. A., March 14, Dr. James M. Yard, executive secretary of the Chicago Conference of Jews and Christians, in urging a united religious front against Fascism and Communism, declared that four factors were necessary for the preservation of American democracy and religious freedom: educational opportunity for every child regardless of race, creed or station, American neutrality in wartime, the preservation of existing civil and religious liberties and economic plenty for all.

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For the Spiritual Life.—The Sulpician Fathers have published English versions of two books in which their great dogmatic and moral theologian, the Very Reverend Adolph Tanquerey, dealt with problems and verities of the religious soul striving for God. The first, which bears the simple title, "The Spiritual Life," is an admirable précis of ascetical and mystical theology. It has been deeply appreciated abroad, and will doubtless be cherished by priests and religious in this country for its clarity, earnestness and insight. In the second book, written in his old age, Father Tanquerey sought to aid "that vast army of devout and earnest Christians to whom the Church looks today, as perhaps never before, for co-operation with the hierarchy in the work of bringing souls to Christ." The chapters of "Doctrine and Devotion" deal with the major truths of mystical theology in a way calculated to stimulate devotion rather than to provoke discussion or what is sometimes called research. God, His Divine Son, Mary Immaculate—these are the sublime subjects, but emphasis is laid upon man's relations with them. The method proposed is that well-tried form which the Sulpicians have proposed these many years for the fostering of priests. Reverend Louis A. Arand is the translator. These books can be obtained from St. Mary's Seminary, Roland Park, Baltimore, Md. "The Spiritual Life" is priced at $3.75; "Doctrine and Devotion" at $2.25. Both have already been highly commended, and we expect that many editions will be required.

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Our National Defenses.—The United States Army now has a plan which, at the cost of almost $500,000,000 a year, will make it, by 1939, one of the most efficient armed forces in the world. By July 1, this year, the goal of 165,000 regular troops is to be attained, and other objectives for the near future include 14,000 regular army officers, 210,000 National Guardsmen and 120,000 reserve officers. In addition a measure in preparation for Congress calls for a corps of reserve troops of 150,000 ex-regulars. Other army objectives include an air force of 2,320 planes, none of them five years old, and the substitution of tanks, tractors and other motor units wherever possible, together with cutting army divisions in half, for purposes of mobility. All troops are to be supplied with 8-shot semi-automatic rifles. The $565,000,000 Navy Bill that recently passed the House contemplates the new construction of 2 capital ships, 8 destroyers and 4 submarines together with the completion of 3 new aircraft carriers, 11 cruisers, 48 destroyers and 17 submarines. Naval observers feel that the great weakness of the United States Navy lies in a lack of adequate auxiliary craft—mine-layers, mine-sweepers, destroyers, submarine tenders, oil carriers, supply ships and repair ships—and an additional $150,000,000 auxiliary craft bill is in process of formulation. Army and Navy experts believe that the nation is vulnerable because of our lack of certain essential raw materials, although it is their consensus that the United States is in a better position in this regard than any other country in the world. They recommended, March 9, that for purposes of national defense enough of these materials be assembled now to last for two years. The largest item is 1,000,000 tons of ferro-manganese ore, the chief sources of which are Brazil, India, Russia and the African Gold Coast. Another large item is 300,000 tons of chromite ore, one-third of which can be produced here if necessary. Then there are 60,000 tons of metallic tin of which we produce none and consume half the world supply, which is controlled by the International Tin Commission that recently increased export quotas to 110 percent of normal capacity. Although the defense experts also list other essential metals, they say nothing about rubber, all of which is grown abroad and of which we consume over half the world's supply. This is also under international control and the export quota was recently raised to 90 percent of normal capacity as prices of this commodity joined metals in rising to new highs.

Rexism.—The spring issue of *Foreign Affairs* carries an article by Harold Callender on "Fascism in Belgium" which gives many observations on the rise of Léon Degrelle since he broke away from the Catholic party in 1935. His first sensational campaign took place in the fall of that year when he led a muck-raking attack on leaders of the Catholic party which resulted in the resignation of the president of the party and of a party senator, both bankers. In the election of the following May, Rex got 281,000 votes, winning 21 out of 202 deputies' seats and 12 of 167 senators'. "We may say, then, that it was because of middle-class discontent, on both economic and political grounds; because of an almost universal recognition of the need of reforming the machinery of the state; and because of the apparent decadence of the traditional parties, that a Fascist movement suddenly appeared in Belgium. It was not born of an acute crisis nor of any mood of despair, as elsewhere, but of a general *malaise.*" The French elections of 1936, installing the Popular Front and bringing on the sit-down strikes, together with the signing of the Franco-Russian treaty, were made to order for Rexist propaganda. Both the strikes and the social legislation spread quickly from France to Belgium. Degrelle attacked Communism with sweeping vigor and strong bourgeois response, and also attacked with indiscrimination the Leftward and social tendencies that were threatening the position of property. Denouncing the Soviet pact, he drew nearer to Germany, appeared pacifistic and impelled his country toward the neutral position which it actually took. As this French impetus died down, Degrelle took up the cause of the Flemish nationalists within Belgium. The undermining of the center is described thus: "The total moderate vote [Catholic, Liberal, Socialist, which is behind the present Van Zeeland government], which was 89.9 percent in 1932, was 73.6 percent in 1936; and the extremist vote [Communist, Flemish Nationalist and Rexist], which was 8.2 percent in 1932, became 25.1 percent in 1936." The feeling of numerous middle-class people is said to be this: that they "admire the Rexists for 'waking up the country' and would like to see them control perhaps 25 percent of the Chamber, 'but not a majority.'"

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The Play and Screen

Candida

IT IS a loss to English literature that George Bernard Shaw should be interested in ideas rather than in character. Ideas fade, wither, dry up, and blow away; character when truly drawn remains. Most of G. B. S.'s ideas have already reached the withering stage, and some of them have dried up and dropped from the figures they once clothed, leaving them as naked and lifeless as so many tailor's dummies—perhaps it would be more accurate to say mummies, each mummy being a dried-up simulacrum of G. B. S. himself. While G. B. S., alive and kicking, is an amusing and often a stimulating fellow, his dried-up simulacrums are neither. They are only sad reminders of the dead jokes and dead ideas in which once they strutted. They are almost as dead as G. B. S.'s latest plays. Yet once, G. B. S. wrote a play in which he left himself out, once in his life he felt a surge of sympathy for his fellow creatures, in fact he even seemed to love them with all their imperfections—and the result was "Candida." Now the irony of it all is that Mr. Shaw will probably be remembered by this play, and for portions of "Saint Joan," precisely because in these two plays he was humble and forgot himself. In "Saint Joan" there is much that is G. B. S. minus his whiskers, but in "Candida" all the characters are real except Marchbanks who is partly a hang-over from the poets of the "Yellow Book." But at least even Marchbanks isn't Shaw, but Shaw honestly trying to be poetic in the Dowson-Wilde manner.

In Katherine Cornell's revival of "Candida" we welcome a worthy presentation of Shaw's best play. Miss Cornell is no stranger to the part, and her last act is today, as it was years ago, among the finest things she has given us. In the opening act, and perhaps also in the second, she is to me a little too much a heroine of classic drama, a little too magnificent and in the grand manner. But what Candida has ever played and read the lines of that wonderful final scene when she gives herself to the weaker of her two suitors, as Katherine Cornell plays and reads those lines? And Miss Cornell is that rare type of artist who always surrounds herself with players worthy of herself. The Marchbanks of Robert Harris is the best I for one have ever seen, for it possesses the charm necessary to make Marchbanks believable. Kent Smith is an excellent Morell, simple, sincere and masculine, and Mildred Natwick's Prossy is a delight. If there is today a better character actress than Miss Natwick she has not shown up on this side of the ocean. A. P. Kaye is as amusing as any of the former Burgesses, and Morgan Farley, who was Peggy Wood's Marchbanks, does well as Miss Cornell's Alexander Mill. In short, a memorable production of a delightful play. (At the Empire Theatre.)

Everyman

THE CATHOLIC REPERTORY THEATRE of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes has shown once more its earnestness and skill in a presentation of the old morality play, "Everyman," in the auditorium of the parish. The actors and actresses under the direction of John C. Kelly show both careful training and native talent, while the settings and lighting are far above what is usually met with in amateur groups. Special words of praise should go to Mary Keys McCloskey as Knowledge, Katherine McCloskey as Five Wits, and Margaret Connelly as Good Deeds. These young women possess distinction and speak their lines musically and effectively. Vernon C. O'Brien was also admirable as Riches. Father Mahoney is to be congratulated on his work, in showing what can be done in the Catholic dramatic field. The Catholic Repertory Theatre of New York is a model of its kind.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

The Lost Horizon

THERE has not been a motion picture in more than a decade that has caused so much advance speculation within the motion picture industry over its eventual economic position in the realm of public acceptance, and even after its projection on the screen in private preview some of the motion picture's most astute minds still were unable to determine whether it will be limitedly or widely accepted. Unanimous, however, is the opinion that the $2,000,000 and untold diligence, patience and effort spent in production are fully commensurate with the physical results obtained.

"The Lost Horizon" projects into a war-mad world a quiet vision of serenity in the brooding spell of the far Himalayas, where James Hilton's novel so beautifully visualized the idealism which hoped to preserve civilization and its art treasures when the rest of the world went to pieces. The mechanical embellishments, dramatic photography and musical accompaniment add impressively to the unorthodox quality which chronicles a strange adventure of a little band of Englishmen and Americans who are led by fate into Shangri-La, a seeming Garden of Eden in the Tibetan valley where peace and contentment reign. The bizarre story asks one to believe in an improbable adventure existent only in vivid imagination. It is, therefore, necessarily laden with dialogue in order to bring the theme within general understanding. Director Frank Capra's artistry invokes a witching mood and sustains it through two hours of tense suspense and action that stirringly erupts dynamically in the very first sequences depicting Chinese revolutionary fury. The quality of the acting is very fine, as led by Ronald Colman, portraying the Hilton character of "Glory" Conway.

There is, indeed, a new pinnacle reached in cinema art, as one magnificent set follows another: the uprising at Baskul, the journey in a giant plane 20,000 feet over the high, treacherous snow-swept Himalayas, the crash of the plane, and the fertile valley in the forbidden land of Tibet with its lamaseries. A triumph of creative ingenuity, too, is the gruelling journey over tortuous, rail-thin mountain passes and the serene beauty of the land at journey's end.

"The Lost Horizon" *is* something new under the motion picture sun, a striking monument to the courage and the vision of Columbia Pictures, its sponsors.

JAMES P. CUNNINGHAM.

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Communications

THE SUPREME COURT

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: The supreme law in the United States is the Constitution. It was laid down by the people of the United States and it established the federal government.

That government consists of three departments, the legislative, the executive and the judicial. The Constitution provided for each certain specified powers; all powers not thus delegated were reserved by the several states to themselves. In addition it placed certain restrictions upon the powers of the legislative department, and upon the powers of the several states. The Congress might not pass certain laws; the states might not pass certain laws. Finally the Constitution provided for its own amendment a specific method for giving effect to the will of the people when it wished to change the law.

The judicial power was vested in the Supreme Court which was to deal with all questions of law and equity arising under the Constitution. The legislature was to determine the number of justices to serve on that Court and the executive was to appoint them with the consent of the Senate; they were to hold their offices during good behavior. The legislature might determine the number of inferior federal courts and of the members thereof.

Now, whatever may have been in the minds of the Constitution's makers as to the powers of the Supreme Court, two things are certain. One is that the Constitution confers by its terms plenary powers upon the Court to interpret the Constitution; that is, to enforce against the executive and the legislative branches the restrictive provisions of that document. No other meaning can be given to its language. The other is that the very structure of the government itself, with its separation of delegated powers, absolutely requires the possession by the Supreme Court of plenary powers to hold the other two departments within the borders of the organic law. Any limitation upon those powers would destroy the principle of separated powers by making either executive or legislature judge of their own cause to the extent of that limitation.

There is only one seat of the power to do that—the people of the United States amending the law which that people itself ordained in the manner which itself ordained. From this conclusion there is no escape.

Secondly, natural justice requires that anyone vested with the judicial power must be impartial in dealing with the issues that come to him for determination. No one will suppose that judges are infallible, for they are human like the rest of us. But certain it is that to appoint judges because they possess strong opinions on matters of public policy, which will come before them in controversy under the law which they are to interpret, would be to violate natural justice in a vital spot. In addition, it would destroy the principle of separated powers by transferring legislative power to the judiciary. Nothing could justify such an action; it is *per se* immoral.

No one can now doubt that it is precisely that action which is the aim of the administration's proposals affecting the Supreme Court. The very arguments of its most enthusiastic supporters prove it; their demand to "unpack the Court" is damning testimony—not that there was any serious attempt in the proposals themselves to conceal their real purpose.

Could any simpler and more serious issue than this be presented to the American people?

THOMAS F. WOODLOCK.

THE SPANISH SITUATION

Ottawa, Ont.

TO the Editor: If there is thought to be any doubt as to what is at stake, from a Catholic point of view, in the Spanish Civil War, surely the best guides are the members of the Spanish hierarchy; and the bishops of Spain, including the two Basque bishops, are unanimous in the opinion that the continued existence of Christianity in Spain depends on the success of General Franco. They have many times made this clear. The latest expression of their conviction is by His Eminence Cardinal Goma, Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain, in a "personal appeal" to Señor Jose Antonio Aguire, President of the Autonomous Government of Euzkadi—the three Basque provinces—urging him to break off his alliance with the Communists and to lead his people into the ranks of the Spaniards "fighting for faith and country." The appeal is printed in full in the *Universe* (London) of February 12 and should be read by all. It is much too long to quote in extenso, but the following excerpts will indicate its tenor.

". . . You say that the war in Spain is not a religious war. . . . Contrary to what you say, it is a war of love for religion against hate for religion. Love of God, love of our parents, has put arms into the hands of half the Spaniards. Hate has armed the other half against God. Here you have battle-fields turned into sanctuaries and churches. On the other side you can see thousands of priests murdered, churches pillaged and destroyed—the fury of Satan let loose against anything that resembles religion in any shape or form. . . . There is no official act of religion in any of the towns or territories under Red rule, while in the parts of Spain where the Nationalists are, religion has received fresh strength and vigor. Political-military pacts, as unstable as promises from unreliable lips, preserve for the time being in Vizcaya priests, churches and practises. But what will happen when the Reds want to break the pact?

". . . But now it is my turn to ask you, Señor Aguire, about your silence over the murders and atrocities which have been and are being perpetrated daily, against priests, nuns and religious of all sorts, all over the territories held by the Red forces. . . . This policy of the 'Basque youth'—this Basque-Communist concubinage—was opposed and fought from the very start by the ecclesiastical hierarchy with all means at its disposal. . . . To obtain your ends of 'country and tradition' you walk arm in arm with people who want to banish the name of God from public

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life and from the private conscience of the whole world. . . . Here are Cataluna, Valencia, Mercia, Castilla la Nueva and a great part of Andalusia, all under the iron heel of Communism, without priests, without churches, without faith, without God. . . . Help your country, Señor Aguire, to preserve the God that others want to kill. Your allies will not help you to save God: Vizcaya [i.e., the Basque country] would not be an exception among all Communist countries [i.e., in the event of a Leftist victory]."

The contrary view of some French and Belgian Catholics is understandable. It is obviously due to dread of a German invasion, which they now fear may be supported by Spain, should Franco succeed. But it is the definite and unanimous conviction of the Spanish bishops, including, let me repeat, the two Basque bishops, that should Franco fail, it would be the end of religion in Spain. To the bishops the issue is clear, and who are in a better position to judge of a religious issue than the hierarchy of the country concerned?

In THE COMMONWEAL of March 12 (page 552) it is alleged that in speaking in England and Ireland on behalf of the Basques who are in league with the Valencia government, Father Laborda "was acting with the express approval of his bishop." This has been questioned (the *Tablet,* February 13, page 225) and Father Laborda has admitted that he is without faculties from his bishop and that the latter, in a pastoral, has stated as follows: "It is not lawful in any form or in any way whatever, much less by civil war, to introduce division into the Catholic front before the common enemy. . . . It is even less lawful, or rather absolutely unlawful, . . . to join hands with the foe, thus mixing Christ's ideas with those of Satan. . . . This unlawfulness reaches its extreme when an alliance is made with Communism."

W. L. SCOTT.

NEWSPAPERS AND OPIUM

West New Brighton, N. Y.

TO the Editor: It is difficult to understand what the editors of THE COMMONWEAL were driving at in their comments under the caption, "Newspapers and Opium," in the issue of January 22, 1937. It would seem that the editors disapprove of those who use newspapers as a means of education and information.

Do the editors disapprove of those who read the New York *Times* from the front to the back page? Do they disapprove of those who read Walter Lippmann, Mark Sullivan and Arthur Krock? Do they disapprove of those who eagerly read the excellent articles on science in the New York *Times?* The answer would be "Yes" according to THE COMMONWEAL, which strongly criticized a certain gentleman who "devours every iota" of news.

This article is not typical of THE COMMONWEAL, which instead of criticizing should highly praise such newspapers as the New York *Times* and the *Herald Tribune.* Why it is only recently that the editors of THE COMMONWEAL praised very highly the *Herald Tribune* for its excellent reporting of the proceedings of the Institute of Domestic Relations.

The editors also infer that anyone who knows baseball should be able to hit a ball; that anyone who has any degree of musical appreciation gained through the radio and by reading should be able to play a musical instrument. Now this is short of ridiculous. There are those who have abilities and talents for these various fields of endeavor and those who definitely have none.

In reference to this whole question of reading newspapers, it is regrettable that the average person reads the *Daily News* and some "rag" publication rather than the New York *Times* and THE COMMONWEAL.

MICHAEL P. CODD.

THE CHILD LABOR ISSUE

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: I am surprised and puzzled over the statement in your editorial on "The Child Labor Issue" that if the Child Labor Amendment were adopted "there would follow enabling legislation, setting up federal standards, regulating the labor of all persons under eighteen years of age, to which the legislation of the separate states would have to conform."

Apparently the writer of the editorial is under the impression that Congress would be required to set up an eighteen-year limit for the employment of young persons. As a matter of fact, the amendment does not compel Congress to do anything. It might fail to enact any sort of child labor legislation. It might set up a sixteen-year limit, which is in all probability just what would happen. Anyone who thinks that senators who come from states having only a fourteen-year limit, would immediately vote for eighteen-year legislation is really too innocent to be at large in our practical world and country. And a considerable majority of the senators come from states having the low limit just mentioned. Of course, there is no metaphysical certainty that Congress, including the senators from the "backward" states, would not enact an eighteen-year law, but metaphysical tests are scarcely appropriate or reasonable in political matters.

In the second place, it is inaccurate to say that "the separate states would have to conform" to the federal legislation. They would have to maintain standards just as high as the latter but they could go higher if they liked.

RT. REV. JOHN A. RYAN.

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY ESTATE

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editor: Population control among the landed gentry persevered in Italy twenty-five years ago and I think, still perseveres in that country in spite of the Duce's taxes on bachelors. In order to preserve the family estate only the oldest son expects to marry. One or more of the daughters may also marry. The remaining unmarried sons and daughters live under the fraternal care of the eldest brother. My informant tells me that people of no estate do not use such precautions.

REV. J. L. SHARP.

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Books

Mexican Agrarianism

The Ejido—Mexico's Way Out, by Eyler N. Simpson. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press. $5.00.

SOME explanation of this book is necessary. The ejido is a method of land settlement. It has similarity with the New Deal's resettlement idea.

Mexico is not only "preponderantly Indian." Mexico has been emphasizing the Indian as the true and only Mexican for thirty years. For a longer time than that the mestizo has been swinging racially away from Spanish assimilation and back to integration with Indian blood. The Indian belongs almost entirely to the class of unskilled agricultural labor. Nothing fits Mexico comfortably today which bears a complete or principally Hispanic mold—and there is as yet no new Indian Mexican mold. That is an essential point in the revolution and its social and educational program.

This book posits that "the governments of Mexico, revolutionary or otherwise, are under the strictest compulsion to find a solution for the agrarian problem." That is not only true of government. It is a clear Christian duty of Catholic leadership outside of government to see to it that in transition from age-old primitive agrarianism to modern industrialism in some form, the Indian shall escape, if possible, the things which vitiate our own economic lives.

Anyone familiar with the complications and short-comings of Mexico's tentative agrarian laws and their administration will agree with Licenciado Ramon Beteta (in his Foreword) that compilation and cross-indexing of all these laws, regulations and decrees is "a tremendous job," and that Dr. Simpson has done a helpful work for future students. In spite of the technical nature of his subject, he has been able to make a readable book also for the general reader, in the process of explaining the reason why right solution of the agrarian problem is necessary, what stands in the way of accomplishment, and the merits of his own thesis as to "Mexico's way out."

He ignores, however, one factor essential to right solution, of which Mr. Beteta as a Mexican is well aware: that Mexico cannot be analyzed without understanding of Catholicism, quite apart from any question of wise or unwise policy on the part of a clergy at a given period. Dr. Simpson might believe that his "technical" book is not concerned with "religion," and that it is enough to show how great land-wealth in the hands of a politically privileged clergy could contribute to present difficulties (which can happen anywhere, through any corporate wealth). Mr. Beteta, with the advantages of his American and Mexican university training, his long statistical experience and his Catholic antecedents, knows that Catholicism cannot be ignored in the solution of the very real problems of his country. It is not enough to pass it over with the quotation that (to the tribal Indian) "the notion of a common God or a universal Church is as strange, as unreal, as ungraspable as the idea of a fatherland larger

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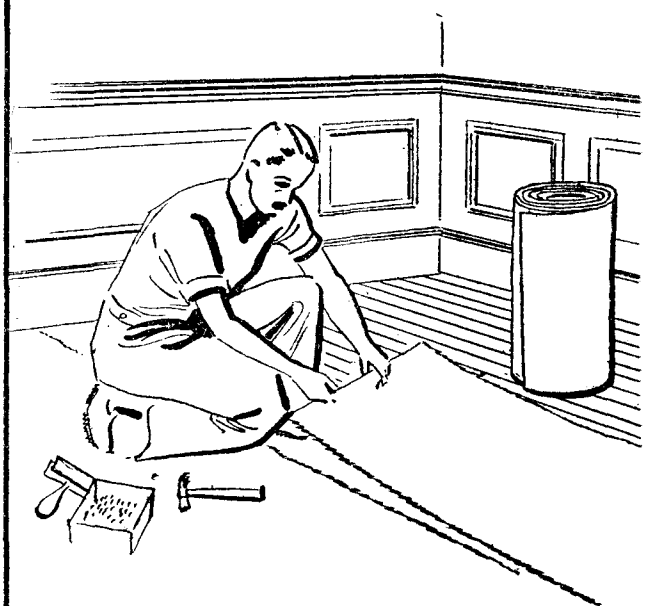

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NEXT WEEK

Once every spring we offer an EDUCATION NUMBER in which are assembled, together with our regular features, a series of definite and constructive ideas dealing specially with this central problem and opportunity. Bird S. Coler, Dom Proface and Joseph M. Tracy are among contributors to next week's symposium. Mr. Coler in CAN WE IMPROVE EDUCATION? considers the relation of the State to education, of vital importance today. . . . Dom Proface, famed student adviser and author of "College Men, Their Making and Unmaking," writes in a penetrating and aimiable manner about COLLEGIATE DRINKING. . . . BY THE CAMP FIRE, by Joseph M. Tracy, goes into the wide and progressively wider field of summer camps and outdoor education.

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than the eye can see, or than one can cover in a good day's walk." That is a part of the problem so important that the whole is insoluble without its consideration. It is a defect to ignore a fundamental flaw.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

Religious Tragedy

A Flower for Sign, by Louis Stancourt. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

STORIES of conversion to Catholicism from Protestantism or scepticism are common enough; this is the only account that I know of telling how a lapsed Catholic found his way back to the Church. If there were nothing else to recommend it there would be its uniqueness.

There is, however, much more. Though obviously, and by definite admission, purely autobiographical, Louis Stancourt, writing under an assumed name about himself as Joseph Tired, uses the form of the novel, achieving at once a vividness and a frankness impossible in any other way. There can be no question that he has produced a poignant and moving book.

Born in Brooklyn of Italian parents, brought up as a not very well instructed Catholic, Joseph Tired (apparently mainly as a means of throwing off the traditions of his father) soon learns to call himself an atheist. He marries in a Protestant church a girl nominally Catholic, like himself, and at once sets himself deliberately to destroy her faith. He succeeds, and then, feeling that their children should have some sort of a religion, takes them to an Episcopalian Sunday School, and even becomes for a time, along with his wife, loosely attached to that religious body.

In the meanwhile, however, he sinks to extreme poverty. Marrying as a $25 a week clerk, he drifts into journalism, makes unsuccessful attempts to write novels, loses job after job, and finally goes on relief. Not unnaturally his wife associates his intellectual instability and his spiritual experiments with his inability to make a success of anything he undertakes, so that when at last he is drawn back to the Catholic Church, she feels that she has had enough of his unaccountable vagaries; this time she bluntly refuses to follow him. It is in the concluding section of the novel, in which we see Joseph Tired trying to win his exasperated wife back to the faith he had destroyed in her, that we have an intensively dramatic situation used to the full. The story of Joseph's conversion from a shallow and belligerent atheism is well told, but the real thrill is not reached until Eve's conversion.

"A Flower for Sign" is unequally written. Some pages are either awkward or affected in style; others achieve beauty and pathos. Though there is practically never any humor in Louis Stancourt's pages, his sensitiveness and sincerity are always apparent—sometimes painfully so. The editing of his book might have been better than it is. With a little more experience he should be able to give us a first-rate religious novel; already he has given us an unusual one.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

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Sovietism and Humor

I Visit the Soviets, by E. M. Delafield. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

ENJOYING some caviar and excellent champagne in a smart London restaurant and this way evidently feeling on the top of the world, Mrs. Delafield, English novelist, was asked by her American publisher to write a funny book about Russia. Mrs. Delafield seems to be a specialist on humorous novels, and as there is now a nation-wide audience for books about Soviet life, only a little champagne is needed for associating humor and Russia. The publisher is probably right: Russian travel impressions are mostly very serious stuff, written by people with pro- and anti- prejudices, which they want to prove by their stories. To read the descriptions of a laughing philosopher instead of political dogmas would be a rare pleasure. But unfortunately the publisher made his clever offer to an unfit author. Mrs. Delafield's book notably lacks humorous wisdom. It is the book of a malcontent who has a certain Left slant and therefore feels obliged to take Bolshevik problems seriously, but feels displeased with their primitive mode of living and lack of conveniences. Though Mrs. Delafield offers some realistic observations on people and conditions of life, her book is an absolute failure as an experiment in describing the Soviet paradise in a humorous way.

Just now parlor-Bolshevism is a literary vogue in this country (as it was in Europe between 1925 and 1930). Therefore we should not be surprised to be informed by some of those snobbish high-hat admirers of "proletarian culture" that Harper's idea was wrong and that such a movement as the realization of a Marxist state does not allow other than sympathetic treatment. Those solemn gentlemen-Bolsheviks are even more rigorous than the Soviet writers, who like to ridicule Russian life within the limits granted by censorship. Any subject in this world allows humorous treatment, provided the author is able to look at it with the right slant. Shakespeare's comedies and "Don Quixote" prove that the possibility of humorous writing does not depend on topics, but on a quality of mind.

Mrs. Delafield makes poor jests on the clumsy activity of the Intourist guides (a topic already worn and torn by dozens of writers visiting Soviet Russia). She also describes a few moderately funny tourists. But outside of this her book is dull, boring, malcontent, lacking in inspiration and full of resentment against the Spartan life the poor English lady has to endure. Why did she disregard all those Soviet problems which cry for the pen of a grim humorist? Is there anything funnier than teeth-cleaning as a part of the Communist youth program, the reestablishment of piecework as "new proletarian progress" (Stakanov movement), and the old, filthy, *petit bourgeois* mentality behind all the mimicry of humanitarianism and brotherhood? Is not the persecuting and killing of all the available fathers of the revolution (with one single exception) for so-called "high treason," a theme for a modern Aristophanes? The tragicomedy of the revolution betrayed is worthy of a genius.

MAX FISCHER.

FOR EASTER

The Blessed Trinity is the central doctrine of the Faith, and the one about which most of us know least. This is odd, but not altogether our fault, for there is hardly anything on it in English. In Dr. Arendzen's new book, THE HOLY TRINITY ($2.50) he discusses the Trinity in relation to the life of God; shows just where the mystery lies (that it has nothing to do with mathematics); what the essence of the matter is; he devotes a chapter to each Person; then goes on to the various heresies on the doctrine. It is as thorough a piece of work as you could wish, and as accurate, but written in a way that any Catholic of average education can enjoy.

Many people have written something about Father Damien—some badly, some well. But none we think, before John Farrow, has written with such determination to see him as he actually looked to those with whom he had to deal—Exasperated Government officials (who were not *always* in the wrong) the Bishop, the adoring lepers, and the rest of those with whom he had dealings. The picture he gives us is all the more attractive for the (very likable) faults that he admits in Father Damien. The author knows the South Seas better than any other part of the world: his interest in the Leper priest was first stirred by island legends of his strength and holiness. Altogether, his DAMIEN THE LEPER ($2.50) seems to us to mark the arrival of another Catholic author who can write naturally about holiness. And there is a portrait in color by Jean Charlot, which we fear will be wrenched out of many copies of the book and framed to hang on the wall.

Father Damien is a perfect example of a man who took a short cut to holiness by the hardest possible road. Not everyone, to put it mildly, has such courage. Many seem to do their best to be sinners all their lives, and yet come to holiness before they die. That, roughly, is what Paul Claudel is talking about in his SATIN SLIPPER ($3.50)—Two people, who do their best to get away from God, but whose very sins are made to serve Him, and who come to Him themselves in the end. It is, by general consent, the greatest of Claudel's works, a book to read six times, and then read again. The present edition is a less expensive reprint of the translation by Father John O'Connor, in which the author collaborated, and of which he said, that if anything it read a shade better than the French original.

WRESTLERS WITH CHRIST ($2.50) by Karl Pfleger, studies of Chesterton, Péguy, Bloy, Dostoievsky, Soloviev, Berdyaev and André Gide is not a bad companion to the Satin Slipper, although it was for a blessing that these seven wrestled, and only one let go without receiving it.

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Stevenson and Others

This Life I've Loved, by Isobel Field. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $3.50.

WHY ISOBEL FIELD should love life becomes increasingly evident as we read of the prodigality with which many of its best gifts were lavished upon her. Although not exceptionally endowed in mind or spirit, she led a most exceptional life among distant and diverse scenes that might well furnish the background for a dozen story-book heroines—a Bret Harte childhood in a mining camp, a "grubby period" in the mean streets of San Francisco, a delightful Antwerp prelude to student days in Julian's atelier in Paris, idyllic holidays in Grez where the Osbourne family first met the "entrancing personality" that was Robert Louis Stevenson, youthful romance and marriage with an artist, halcyon days in an island paradise, in Hawaii when it belonged to the Hawaiians and she was a privileged member of King Kalakaua's circle of friends, a less happy interim in a theatrical boarding house in Sydney, Australia.

To most readers, the most rewarding part of the book will be the last chapters, devoted to the author's life at Vailima as the loved stepdaughter of R. L. S.—one of the "Sa Tusitala," the Clan of Stevenson, which included his very Scotch mother, his American wife and stepchildren, and the Samoan retainers. Highly entertaining is her account of her experiences as housekeeper with magnificent native six-footers in her kitchen squad to do her "obsequious observances." As her stepfather's amanuensis, she wrote and read a correspondence that ranged from brusque requests for "a complete set of Samoan stamps" to the infinite charm of the Barrie-Stevenson letters. Although she knew R. L. S. with far less intimacy and understanding than his *fidus Achates,* Lloyd Osbourne, nevertheless her picture of Stevenson in a domestic rôle is a confirmation of her brother's revelation of him, as boyish, approachable, tolerant and tender, passionately resentful of injustice, "a man in whom the gift of genius had not displaced the most winning, the most lovable personal qualities."

The book is written with none of that conscious art that was Stevenson's, that exquisite and original style, that bright felicity of epithet. But it has Mrs. Field's candid and buoyant simplicity, which makes it not only a valuable complement to her mother's and brother's recollections of Stevenson but a very readable human document.

LUCILE HARRINGTON.

Chicago Slums

Chicago Commons through Forty Years, by Graham Taylor. Chicago: Chicago Commons Association. $1.50.

CHICAGO COMMONS is a pioneer settlement house of the United States, founded by a great social engineer, Graham Taylor, and guided by him as an adventure of faith as well as a proving-ground for the social spirit. This book is the expression of what it has meant to its neighborhood and the city and in its far-flung relationships. As a neighborhood center, Chicago Commons is the focus for varied experiences and fellowships shared

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across the dividing lines of a cosmopolitan city. But beyond that, in the light of its forty years, it stands out as a vantage point for observation and interpretation. The complex issues in the quickened life of today—social, civic, industrial—are seen in their human significance through the experiences described in these pages.

Chicago Commons was in a cosmopolitan slum neighborhood and this book is the story of the underprivileged man, woman and child in a rich American city. It is an epitome of the conflicts of the "melting pot" and finds its repercussions in the problems of capital and labor and race relations. Here are studied their human significance and how a friendly understanding can help to share their sorrows and joys. Here is an interpretation of how the "other half" lives and how good-will is the open sesame to reconcile the natural conflicts of race and color and religion. This book is also the story of a man who all his life has been an interpreter of class and class and while fighting against every demoralizing social condition, has done so without upsetting the apple cart. The problems of our nation are seen here in miniature and the analysis of their human meaning by a thoroughly spiritual observer would go a long way in the solution of our gravest national problems. The book has particular significance to sociologists, social workers, and church leaders who are interested in interpreting, understanding and adjusting their less fortunate fellow citizens.

FREDERIC SIEDENBURG.

A Human Story

Peary, by William Herbert Hobbs. New York: The Macmillan Company. $5.00.

THIS biography of Rear Admiral Peary is the story of the progress of a great man's character from boyhood to the goal he set himself, the North Pole; then on with no flagging to the end that awaits us all. Professor Hobbs not only gives us a careful, scientific study of Peary's explorations, supplemented with maps, records and diagrams, but also the human story of a conquest that was fought through tremendous adversities.

Part One, "The Period of Training," portrays the driving power of Peary's personality, which was his from the start. This gift brought him early recognition from the government in his services for the Navy Department during the Nicaragua Canal survey. After completing this survey his attention was turned to Greenland, which he had always longed to explore. From this point onward there is a steady record of Peary's achievements during the next twenty-three years of explorations, and his attempts to reach the North Pole, leading up to his final victory in 1909.

The Cook controversy is admirably dealt with, so that future generations of Americans will be able to appreciate what Peary, one of their greatest men, did for the honor of his country. Peary's dignified attitude contrasted strongly with the frivolous behavior of the pretender to his fame.

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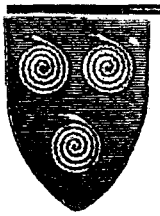
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Social Correspondence

AE's Letters to Minanlabain; with an Introduction by Lucy Kingsley Porter. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.00.

THESE letters are of a social character, written to a pleasant American couple who had a fine place in Donegal. They are appropriately full of trivialities and irresponsible judgments expressed for the moment. Many reflect an independent mind with interesting proportions of constructiveness, destructiveness and absurdity. Unfortunately, they are mostly also trite and disproportionately concerned with various sorts of comfort. They strangely lack wit and humor. If AE was a seer—a rôle assigned very casually to successful Irish men of letters—it was obviously only when at his best, which apparently was not when revealing himself in social correspondence. The Introduction by Mrs. Porter has much greater feeling and humanity than the rest of the book: it is a good Introduction.

From Coleridge Onward

Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry, by Douglas Bush. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. $5.00.

SOME years ago Professor Bush pubished an interesting volume on the English Renaissance and mythology. The present volume is not a sequel to that, although it does continue the story, but an independent treatise of real value and very considerable charm. Working from a genuinely tremendous bibliography, the author discusses practically every poet who used mythology and proceeds after that to some interesting conclusions. Professor Bush never loses a reputable lightness of touch (though it does lead him occasionally to an atrocious witticism), and his taste is commendable.

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